

JANUARY 19, 20, 21, 1995
COLUMBIA
Clinton tour cancelled after bomb scare
LOS ANGELES (AP) — President Bill Clinton's scheduled tour of an earthquake-damaged university here today was cancelled after Secret Service agents found three suspicious pipe bombs.
White House spokesman Michael McCarty said the tour of the University of California, Santa Barbara, was cancelled after the discovery of the bombs. The tour was scheduled to begin today at 10 a.m. and was to last for three days.
The bombs were found in a rooming house where Clinton was to stay. The rooming house was owned by a woman who had been contacted by Clinton's travel agent.
The bombs were found by Secret Service agents. One bomb was found in a rooming house, and two were found in a car. The bombs were found after Clinton's arrival in Santa Barbara.
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Algeria urges allies to quash militants
TUNIS (R) — Algeria on Friday urged its allies to quash Muslim fundamentalists, hours before a security meeting between interior ministers of four Southern European countries and three North-African states. "We are going to work ... to make our Mediterranean partners aware of the terrorism hydra and drive and eradicate this plague which threatens the future of economies and the stability in the region," Algerian Interior Minister Abdul Rahman Meziane Cherif said upon his arrival in Tunis. He is expected to take part in a two-day meeting with the interior ministers of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Tunisia to coordinate the fight against violent Muslim fundamentalists. European diplomats said. The meeting, dubbed "4.3," was suggested by France's Interior Minister Charles Pasqua. It was to open either on Friday night or Saturday morning, they said. See related story on page 12.

Volume 19 Number 5823

King consoles Syrian leader
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday telephoned Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to offer consolation for him and his family on the first anniversary of the death of his son, Basil Al Assad. The Syrian president expressed his appreciation of the King's feelings and wished him continued good health.

Japan's Naruhito visits Mideast
TOKYO (AFP) — Crown Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako of Japan left Tokyo on Friday for an official 11-day visit to Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan.

Clinton ratings on the rise
WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's job performance ratings are on the rise, according to polls released this week. In NBC-Wall Street Journal survey released Friday, showed 50 per cent approval of Mr. Clinton's handling of both foreign and economic policy, while 38 per cent disapproved. Yet his overall approval rating was 45 per cent, down slightly from 48 per cent in a similar poll in December. In a CNN-USA Today poll, some 56 per cent said they viewed Clinton favorably up from 48 per cent on Dec. 30. His job performance in the CNN-USA Today survey was 47 per cent, up from 40 per cent.

Plane with 16 aboard crashes in Siberia
MOSCOW (R) — A Russian transport plane carrying 14 passengers and two crew crashed soon after take-off in Siberia on Friday, ITAR-TASS news agency said. There was no word on casualties. TASS said the Czech-made I-410 twin-engine propeller plane went down near the airport at the town of Krasnoyarsk. It gave no reason for the crash. Official figures show at least 287 people died in 1994 in crashes in Russian airspace.

Ten die in Paris plane crash
PARIS (AFP) — Ten people were killed when a Mystere Falcon 50 executive jet made an emergency landing in flames at Le Bourget airport north of the French capital on Friday, rescue services said. The plane crashed-landed as it tried to return to the runway after one of its engines caught fire. It had just taken off from Le Bourget, rescue services said. Aviation authorities said all seven passengers and three crew aboard the plane were killed. The aircraft, belonging to the Leadair company, crashed-landed on the main runway scattering debris over several hundred metres and burned there. The plane's flight plan said it was bound for Romania. The passengers were not identified.

Relief agencies to stay in Somalia
MOGADISHU (AFP) — Non-governmental relief agencies in Somalia pledged Friday that they would stay on after the departure of U.N. troops but expressed fears about security. George Bennett, spokesman for the U.N. Operation in Somalia, said the pledges came at a meeting between representatives of the relief agencies and Benon Sevan, a visiting U.N. security official. The agencies "expressed serious concern about security," Mr. Bennett said.

Jordan Times
An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Christopher announces war on crime
WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Friday announced a campaign against international terrorists, criminals and drug traffickers, including tougher laws on asset seizure, visas and alien smuggling. In a prepared foreign policy speech, Mr. Christopher announced a five-point plan: — to insist that other countries extradite or prosecute international fugitives and ensure convicted criminals serve tough sentences; — to develop with other governments tough asset forfeiture and money laundering laws; — to toughen U.S. visa standards to make it harder for criminals to gain entry to the country; — to propose legislation to combat alien smuggling and immigration fraud with harsher penalties; — to expand U.S. laws against terrorists and funding for their activities.

AMMAN SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1995, SHAABAN 20, 1415 Price: Jordan 150 Fils

King and Mubarak meet in Aqaba today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak are expected to meet at Aqaba today for talks on bilateral relations, the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Arab World in general in the first visit of the Egyptian leader to Jordan after the Gulf crisis.

It was not immediately clear whether the Aqaba talks were to be a preliminary meeting between the two leaders ahead of a Feb. 1 visit that President Mubarak was scheduled to make to the Kingdom. The Feb. 1 visit was agreed upon during talks Mr. Mubarak held with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti in Cairo on Jan. 12. Meanwhile, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh was due in Damascus late Saturday and most probably in Jordan on Sunday, raising the prospect of a trilateral summit at Aqaba. But analysts said it was unlikely. If indeed such a summit takes place, then it would be the first among the three after the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, which saw Jordan and Yemen on what some Arab leaders perceived as the Iraqi side of the fence while Egypt was staunchly on the other.

The King's meeting with President Mubarak comes amid increasing calls from various Arab quarters emphasising the need to rally Arab ranks as the Middle East slowly moves towards Arab-Israeli peace.

It also comes prior to an expected visit to Jordan by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat for talks with King Hussein on Jordanian-Palestinian relations and issues related to the peace process.

Among the topics for discussion between the King and President Mubarak, who met last in July 1994 in Alexandria, Egypt, are Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the status of the Middle East peace process and efforts to heal the inter-Arab differences left behind by the Gulf crisis.

(Continued on page 7)



Residents form a line to receive water from a tanker truck in Kobe, central Japan, following Tuesday's devastating earthquake (AFP photo)

Kobe fights to survive; toll rises

KOBE (Agencies) — Residents of Kobe struggled to regain a sense of normality Friday after the loss of nearly 5,000 relatives and friends as electricity returned to parts of the wrecked city and clean-up operations got under way. Empress Akihiko, who had offered a donation, promised a visit to the devastated area, as charges flew about the inadequate preparation and the slow response of emergency services following Tuesday's earthquake.

Massive damage from the quake, which measured 7.2 on the Richter scale and struck Kobe and other parts of western Japan, killed at least 4,438 people with 673 reported missing, according to official reports.

Trained dogs flown in from Switzerland were still searching for survivors three days after the port city and surrounding areas were devastated by the worst tremor since the great Tokyo earthquake of 1923 in which 140,000 people died. More than 40,000 buildings and homes were destroyed in and around Kobe.

Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama admitted at the opening of the Diet's 1995 regular parliamentary session Friday that "there was apparently confusion as we did not have any experience, and it happened early in the morning."

"We are aware that it is an extremely important task for us to build up our risk management system in disasters," he added, amid heckling from the floor.

His statement may not have been heard in Kobe's western district in Nagata — one of the worst-hit areas — where entire blocks of wooden houses were burned to ashes by fires erupting after the quake.

"Do you see down there? That's where my house was," said a man pointing his finger at a scorched, empty plot of land. There is nothing left here, except the smoking remains of houses and unidentified, disfigured objects scattered on the ground.

The streets of Nagata are mostly empty, and where houses are still standing, electricians are trying to restore power.

At important intersections, tanker trucks distribute water to residents, who sullenly wait in line. It will take weeks to put the water system back in order, but local authorities overwhelmed with work in the first couple of days of the quake aftermath are beginning to get organised.

Japanese business has taken gradual steps to profitable, disfigured objects scattered on the ground.

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli, Syrian envoys to meet

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's army radio said on Friday the Israeli and Syrian ambassadors to the United States would meet next week in Washington in a fresh attempt to revive stalled peace talks.

The radio, quoting Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, said the talks would last 10 days and might be followed by a meeting between senior army officers of the two countries.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman, Oded Ben-Ami, said of the radio report and similar accounts in Israeli newspapers: "I can't say if they'll meet because I don't know."

Haaretz newspaper said the talks would focus on arranging a first summit between Mr. Rabin and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

The two countries launched peace talks more than three years ago but have failed to agree on terms for a settlement. Formal negotiations broke down last February, but Israeli and Syrian ambassadors to the U.S. have since held several meetings.

Last month the two countries' army chiefs met to discuss security arrangements. "Negotiations will resume next week at the level of ambassadors and take place again after another 10 days when senior army officers should attend," Mr. Rabinovich told Israel's military radio station on Friday.

"I think the Syrians want to reach an agreement and today they understand that they cannot dictate conditions to us."

General elections are due in Israel in November 1996 and this year is considered the last chance for Prime Minister Rabin to seal an accord based on land-for-peace.

Mr. Rabin reiterated this week his call for President Assad to agree to meet.

Israel, PLO march on through settlement storm

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have kept alive their autonomy negotiations despite a gathering storm over the pursuit of Jewish settlement building.

Calls from senior Palestinian figures to halt the talks were temporarily silenced as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat put on a brave show, stressing commitment to implementing the second phase of self-rule.

"The meeting Thursday was very important because they decided to go ahead," Israeli government spokesman Uri Dromi told AFP.

"The real negotiations will start next week and take several weeks," he said, predicting an agreement within a few months.

"The Palestinians accept the principle of limited redeployment. The differences are not as big as before," Mr. Dromi claimed.

He admitted nonetheless that "on core issues there was no progress."

However, Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin may only have delayed the decisive battle leaving officials to find a way out of a stalemate which has already seen implementation slip seven months behind schedule.

Mr. Arafat demanded "honest and accurate" implementation, meaning quick army redeployment outside Palestinian towns to enable elections to be held. Mr. Rabin, demanding more effort, settled for more negotiations to find agreement.

With Mr. Arafat prepared to plough on, the focus switches to the Israeli government itself which is squirming under the spotlight of attention on settlement policy.

Amid leaked reports of plans to build 7,700 Jewish homes this year and for Jerusalem to swallow up more of the West Bank, the cabinet is set for a potentially explosive meeting on the policy on Sunday.

Mr. Rabin's assurances of a freeze on new Jewish settlement contrasted starkly with the visible expansion of Israeli colonies and land grabs which have ignited repeated clashes on the West Bank.

Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni, one of four left-wing ministers who threatened to quit last week unless the settlers were reined in, was not ready to take Mr. Rabin's pledge at face-value.

"The promises Rabin made to Arafat have to be checked out on the ground. We have to wait and see what happens in cabinet."

"I hope that after Sunday's (Continued on page 7)

Kabariti describes Ifran meeting as an important achievement

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti returned home on Friday after attending a meeting of the Jerusalem Committee in Morocco and said the conference was an important achievement since it was the first such forum which was not split by Arab or Muslim differences.

In arrival comments, Mr. Kabariti, who also visited Tunisia on his way home from the Moroccan resort of Ifran where the Jerusalem Committee met, said he also met in the Tunisian capital with senior Palestinian officials and discussed Jordanian-Palestinian relations, which, he said, "will witness improvements in the next few days."

That appeared to be a reference to an expected visit to Jordan by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, with whom Mr. Kabariti held talks in Ifran. Mr. Kabariti met in Tunis with Faisal Hussein, Abbas Zaki and Hakam Balawi, all of them senior Palestinian officials.

At the Ifran meeting, Mr. Kabariti said, Jordan clearly presented its stand on Jerusalem to the panel, an offshoot of the 52-member Organisation of Islamic Conference.

"Jordan firmly stressed its principled stands, especially those concerning measures taken by Israel in Jerusalem," the Jordan News (Continued on page 7)

Peres due here 'soon' for talks on ties amid Jordan-Arab moves

By Natasha Bakhari

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will visit the Kingdom "as soon as possible" for talks with Jordanian officials on Jordan's position vis-a-vis the peace process in light of the latest developments on Jordanian-Arab relations, diplomatic sources said Friday.

The sources said that a recent telephone conversation between Mr. Peres and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan dealt with the Israeli minister's coming visit, bilateral relations and preparations for the economic summit of the convening of which has been postponed from July to October pending sufficient support for the meeting which will be a follow-up to the Casablanca economic summit which was held in Morocco late last year.

Mr. Peres' expected visit comes after breakthroughs in Jordanian efforts to improve strained ties between the Kingdom and some Arab states as well as the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

A visit to Cairo on Jan. 12 by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti resulted in arranging a summit meeting between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and His Majesty King Hussein to take place here in the first week of February.

Also, intensive Jordanian-Palestinian contacts succeeded in containing the recent strain in Jordanian-Palestinian relations. The two sides have agreed to hold minister-level meetings on Sunday ahead of a visit to Amman by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Jan. 25.

But Israel is "anxiously observing Jordan's moves towards mending ties with Arab states," said the sources, adding that the Jewish state "fears that these moves might undermine the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and both sides' pledge to establish warm peace between them."

They added that Tel Aviv was seeking assurance from Amman that Jordan's steps towards Arab reconciliation would not have any negative impact on Jordanian-Israeli relations.

The Oct. 26 peace accord calls for "establishing normal relations" between the two (Continued on page 7)

Chechen pockets hold out against Russian onslaught

GROZNY (Agencies) — Pockets of Chechen resistance in central Grozny held out against the Russian army and intensive bombing on Friday as refugees fled in terror.

Chechen leaders said they were determined to resist despite the fall of the presidential building to Russian forces on Thursday and the Russian onslaught Friday.

In Moscow, an aide to President Boris Yeltsin said that the capture of the presidential building "can certainly be considered as the final act of the Chechen tragedy."

Aslan Maskhadov, head of the Chechen forces general staff, said the separatists had abandoned positions in the city centre, notably around the railway station where heavy fighting raged through the night.

But his independence fighters had taken up new defensive positions on the eastern bank of the Sunzha River that divides the capital.

Mr. Maskhadov said he was now in a stronger defensive position and that he had only abandoned the presidential building after a penetration bomb pierced the concrete, threatening the bunker.

"Our positions here are much better, and if the Russians want to cross the river they will have to pay a very high price," he said.

Russian artillery and aircraft rained explosives around the devastated presidential building to wipe out resistance.

Russian helicopters flew overhead, using loudspeakers to call on Chechens to surrender, promising they would be well treated. "You are surrounded. Your only chance for survival is to lay down your arms," a speaker blared.

But Russian army commanders admitted that Chechen forces were still operating. Interfax news agency reported.

About 1,500 men on the Chechen side armed with rocket launchers and anti-tank grenades were in the southern Chernorechye suburb, Interfax said.

One fighter, Yusup Mtaranov, 42, said: "If we have to die, we will die. But they will have to kill every Chechen, one by one. We will fight for (Continued on page 7)

Israeli 'copters attack S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (R) — Israeli helicopters attacked an abandoned army barracks in South Lebanon on Friday, hours after Israeli soldiers killed three guerrillas in a firefight, security sources said.

Two helicopters fired at least one rocket and about 1,000 heavy machinegun rounds at the barracks near the market town of Nabatieh where guerrillas were believed to be hiding, they said. There was no immediate word on guerrilla casualties.

Guerrillas fired at least three missiles at the attacking choppers but failed to hit them, the sources added.

Israeli soldiers and guerrillas had fought with machineguns and anti-tank rockets overnight in the rugged Wadi Al Slouqi on the borders of Israel's occupation zone in South Lebanon.

The bullet-riddled corpses of two guerrillas were taken to a village hospital by multinational U.N. peacekeepers operating in the south, the sources said. They said a third guerrilla died in hospital in the southern port of Sidon and a fourth was wounded.

Mr. Rabin reiterated this week his call for President Assad to agree to meet.

The pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God), a faction bent on driving Israeli troops out of South Lebanon, claimed responsibility for the attack saying its fighters clashed with an Israeli force in Wadi Al Slouqi.

On Thursday, Israeli troops killed five Palestinian guerrillas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in a clash in the zone in which two Israelis were wounded.

PFLP-GC said Thursday's ambush was in retaliation for a massive Israeli air raid on Sunday against a PFLP-GC post in hills south of Beirut in which three people died.

About 1,000 Israeli troops and 3,000 allied South Lebanon army militia patrol the zone, which Israel established in 1985 to curb guerrilla raids on its north (see page 2).

Another two men believed to be Palestinian guerrillas were found dead from wounds apparently suffered in the exchange with Israeli troops, security sources in a neighbouring U.N.-policed area said.

In Israel, the army command said Friday that "the five guerrillas killed on Thursday were aided by another squad which was giving cover fire and firing mortars at Israeli defence forces." The Israelis "opened fire at them, causing deaths and wounded."

Thursday's casualties raised the overall toll of escalating violence in South Lebanon since Jan. 1 to 12 killed and 17 wounded.

Two U.N. peacekeeping positions were hit by Israeli tank shells during Thursday night's fighting. The attacks caused damaged but no casualties and prompted the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to lodge a protest with the Israeli army.

UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel said three tank shells struck a Nepalese peacekeeping post near the village of Yater, with at least one round scattering hundreds of steel darts.

"The Nepalese were simply lucky," he said Friday from UNIFIL headquarters in the border town of Naqura.

Also, an Irish UNIFIL position sustained shrapnel hits from an Israeli tank shell.

Israel is 'losing patience' in S. Lebanon, Lahd says

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Israel is "losing patience" with Lebanon's official support for guerrilla groups like the Hizbollah, the commander of its army in South Lebanon has warned.

"The situation is not very calm and unless it changes the Lebanese government will have to pay the consequences," Antoine Lahd, a retired Lebanese army general, told AFP.

Gen. Lahd commands the Lebanese Army (SLA) militia, trained and financed by Israel and backed with helping Israeli troops control an 1,000-square-kilometre "security zone" north of the international border.

Multi-state controls 20 Israeli positions while Israeli troops are only three, including the formidable Beaufort Castle nestled on a mountain peak that commands a view of South Lebanon.

Gen. Lahd was speaking Thursday at a few hours before Israeli troops killed a Palestinian guerrilla in a house near the border that left two soldiers wounded.

According to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, a Damascus-based organisation hostile to the Arab-Israeli peace process, the guerrilla ambushed an armoured Israeli convoy.

AFP correspondents touring the zone Thursday saw a column of tanks, armoured

personnel carriers and military vehicles entering the buffer area from northern Israel.

It was not immediately clear if this was part of troop rotations or reinforcements.

"The Israelis are becoming nervous. They are losing patience and are about to do something because they see that Hizbollah is leading the Lebanese government," Gen. Lahd said.

"They can shake up the Lebanese government at any moment and by any means," he said without elaborating.

"Certainly the Israelis have no interest in massing the population (in South Lebanon) but they could force them to flee the region," through retaliatory shelling of villages, he said.

"They have their own interests to safeguard and I will not be able to do anything," he said.

Israel carried out a seven-day blitz on South Lebanon in 1993, killing more than 150 people and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes after repeated attacks on northern Israel.

Israeli political and military leaders have ruled out a large-scale offensive against South Lebanon but repeatedly called on Lebanon and Syria — which employs 35,000 troops in Lebanon — to rein in the guerrillas.

But as Hizbollah stepped up calls on the SLA militia to repeat or face death, Lebanese government officials and religious clerics continued to condemn its crusade to rid South Lebanon of

Israeli occupation as a sacred cause.

Lebanese Defence Minister Mohsen Dallul also pledged SLA militiamen would be tried for treason if Israel pulled out of the zone.

Gen. Lahd brushed aside Mr. Dallul's comments as "meaning nothing to me."

Last week Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin pledged continuous support for the SLA and said peace with Lebanon depended on the disarming of Hizbollah and the integration of the militia in Lebanese army ranks.

Mr. Rabin made the remarks during a morale-boosting tour of the zone. Israeli parliamentary speaker, Shevah Weiss, followed in his footsteps and also called on Gen. Lahd Thursday.

The SLA lost 34 men in 1994 compared to 17 the previous year, according to Lebanese security officials.

"Militarily Hizbollah has not succeeded," Gen. Lahd said, although he admitted the group was very well equipped and trained.

They were also being used as a card by Syria in its negotiations with Israel.

Anti-Israeli resistance in South Lebanon has existed since 1967, first with the Palestinians and now with Hizbollah "but it hasn't changed anything," Gen. Lahd stressed.

"I have been here for 11 years and in all that time we've had only 30 desertions," he said.

Jordanian youth killed in Grozny

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A young Jordanian of Chechen origin was killed last week in the Chechen capital of Grozny, the first-known Jordanian victim in the six-week-old war, the youth's family said Friday.

The youth was identified as Marwan Taha Ulby of Zarqa.

According to a family friend and member of the Jordanian Committee for the Support of the Independent Caucasus Republic of Chechnya (JCSCP), Adnan Younis Matthab, the family received notification of Ulby's death a few days ago.

Mr. Matthab, who said he was with the Ulby family on Friday, told the Jordan Times that Ulby, a mechanic had emigrated to Chechnya last August to set up a workshop there.

He became involved in the war in Chechnya launched by Russia which moved its troops to the breakaway republic on Dec. 11, Mr. Matthab said.

One of Marwan's brothers, who is a student in Grozny and is still there, informed the family of his death and said that he had been buried there.

No precise details were available as to how he was killed except that the death was directly related to the fighting.

Marwan Ulby, who was unmarried, was the son of Sheikh Taha Ulby, an imam at the Chechen mosque in Zarqa.

Mr. Matthab said Sheikh Taha was visiting some mosques in Amman to collect donations for the Chechen cause.

Meanwhile, there has been no word on the fate of two Jordanian students, also of Chechen origin,

who were reportedly arrested by Russian authorities more than 10 days ago.

JCSCP Chairman Said Bino said the committee was awaiting information from the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) which had promised assistance in locating the students.

Mr. Bino added that a group of more than 20 Jordanian-Chechens intending to return from the war-torn republic to Jordan were still believed to be stranded in the Daghestan, area of Southern Russia.

Reports said earlier this month that many of them had lost their passports and were not permitted to leave Daghestan.

Mr. Bino said the Jordanian government would probably airlift those in Daghestan and transport the group back here after securing Russian government clearance.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prosecutor seeks rights activists' acquittal

ANKARA (AFP) — Ankara's state security court prosecutor is appealing the recent acquittal of six human rights activists who were charged with separatism, the Turkish Human Rights Foundation said Friday.

The organisation in a communiqué said the prosecutor had filed his appeal January 11, the same day the six were acquitted in a move seen as a gesture to appease western criticism of Ankara's human rights record.

The six activists, who include the president of the foundation, Yavuz Onen, and the head of the Turkish Human Rights Association, Akin Birdal, had been charged with "separatism" after making allegations of torture and other rights abuses in published statements concerning Turkey's Kurdish minority.

A month before their acquittal, the same court had handed down stiff prison sentences against eight former deputies of Kurdish origin who faced similar charges. The sentences had sparked widespread criticism in Europe and were largely responsible for the postponement of a customs accord between Turkey and the European Union.

The six human rights activists had faced prison terms of between six months and five years.

'No Israeli nationality for disloyal citizens'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli nationality should be taken away from those who are "disloyal" towards the state, under a proposal put forward by the internal security service Shin Beth, the radio reported Friday.

The measure targets Arab Israelis who join Palestinian groups, but could also be used against Jewish extremists who have emigrated to Israel, the state channel said.

A committee of Justice Ministry representatives and security officials has been set up to study the recommendation. Existing Israeli administrative legislation — under which citizens can lose their nationality for disloyalty — is contested by legal experts who argue the state has recourse to charges of treason, spying or contact with enemy.

Tanzania to reopen ties with Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Tanzania will soon reopen diplomatic ties with Israel after they were broken off more than 20 years ago, Israeli radio said Thursday.

General Nissim Zivli, Mr. Zivli on a visit to Dar Es Salaam met this week with President Ali Hassan Mwinyi who said the east African country was ready to reestablish diplomatic links, the radio reported Thursday.

Tanzania was among about 20 African countries that broke off diplomatic ties in 1973 following the Arab-Israeli war.

Israeli police caught smuggling videos

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Airport customs officers caught three Israeli policemen trying to smuggle in video recordings on their return from three months on international duty in Haiti, the authorities said Friday.

The men were fined and now face a police inquiry after an otherwise exemplary spy helping to bring democracy to Haiti after the U.S. invasion last year.

Libyan official reappears in public

NICOSIA (AFP) — Major Khweildi Hmeidi, an aide to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, has reappeared in public for the first time since September ending rumours that he was in disgrace, according to a report.

Libyan radio, monitored in Cyprus, said Mr. Hmeidi on Tuesday delivered a speech in Zuzara, western Libya, to mark the anniversary of a student demonstration against the monarchy in the town in 1964.

Unconfirmed rumours had spread that Mr. Hmeidi had fallen from grace since he had failed to attend ceremonies held in September in Tripoli to mark the 25th anniversary of Colonel Qadhafi's coming to power.

King Idriss Saruusi was toppled in 1969 by Col. Qadhafi and 11 other army officers, including Mr. Hmeidi and Major Abdul Salam Jalloud. Maj. Jalloud, who had been considered Libya's second-in-command, had not been seen on the political scene since August.

Of Col. Qadhafi's former companions in the coup, Libyan state-run media has only mentioned since September Colonel Ali-Bakr Younes Jaber, the armed forces commander, and Major Mustapha Kharrubi. The others have over the years either fled abroad, perished in unexplained accidents or been kept away from official duties in Libya.

Lebanese dies in Israeli jail after torture

BEIRUT (AFP) — A 28-year-old Lebanese held without trial for 10 years in an Israeli prison in southern Lebanon has died after being tortured, a Lebanese prisoners' solidarity committee said Wednesday.

Haytham Dajaja died on Monday in a Marjayoun hospital in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon after being taken there, a committee monitoring Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails said.

It is the third reported death within a month connected with the Khiam prison, the main detention centre in the zone which has been closed to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) since it was opened in 1983.

Two ex-prisoners, Salim Awada and Ali Al Ghul, apparently died in December in Beirut a few days after they were freed.

Palestinian returns after 25 years

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli authorities, in a rare move, allowed a senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) member absent from his native land for 25 years to return, interior ministry officials said on Friday.

They said security officials dropped their objections last month to the return of Sabri Jirjes, a leader in PLO of the Palestine National Council.

Israel let thousands of Palestinians return to the occupied West Bank after signing a peace deal with the PLO in 1993, but it was the first known case where a PLO activist was allowed to return.

General Islamic Congress urges Gingrich to reconsider Jerusalem call

AMMAN (AP) — The Amman-based General Islamic Congress for Jerusalem has called on U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich to reconsider his call for moving the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem.

The executive board of the General Islamic Congress for Jerusalem has followed with concern and anxiety your call for the transfer of the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem," said a letter from the organisation to Mr. Gingrich.

"Your remarks were inappropriate in sense and spirit of the security Council Resolution 242 which forbids changes from moving the U.S. embassy in Israel to occupied Jerusalem," it said.

"The executive board considers your remarks as unfair and have a negative effect on the conflict on the future of Jerusalem and

biased against the legitimate rights of the Muslim-Christian citizens of this occupied Holy City," said the letter, a copy of which was faxed to the Jordan Times.

"As a leader of the majority party and speaker of the House of Representatives majority party, we urge you to reconsider your statement and reassess your position to support the right and just solution for the cause of Jerusalem as occupied territory since 1967 which Security Council Resolution 242 has identified and which the government of the U.S. has approved."

"We assure you that calling for moving the American embassy to occupied Jerusalem will have its negative impact on all Arabs, Muslims and Christians around the world. It will demoralise the American people towards peace, justice and people's

rights. We hope that your personal role in the ongoing peace process will remove obstacles rather than complicate the situation which needs justice, wisdom and right for achieving a sound and just solution for Jerusalem."

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelly was asked during a Wednesday press briefing whether "the State Department would be bound to follow the orders of Congress if Congress ordered the U.S. embassy in Israel to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem? In other words, is that within the purview of Congress to dictate such a move?"

Ms. Shelly replied: "I think that's a legal question, or at least I would want to consult the department's legal advisor before I would answer that. I will check on that."

UAE boosts marriage fund

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Rising demand has prompted the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to boost the capital of a state fund set up to encourage marriages between local people by helping to pay for dowries and weddings.

A fund official told AFP Friday that the capital of the marriage fund will be increased to 250 million dirhams (\$68.1 million) this year from 150 million dirhams (\$40.8 million).

It is the second capital increase since the fund was set up in 1991 by President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan in a bid to encourage UAE men to marry local women.

Officials said the new rise would be covered by allocations from the 1995 federal budget, yet to be released.

"The increase in the capital was necessitated because of a surge in demand for grants," the fund official said.

Grants of up to 70,000 dirhams (\$19,073) are given to men wanting to marry local women to help them meet soaring dowries and wedding costs, which can exceed \$100,000. However, applications for grants to high-cost weddings are rejected.

"We have just approved 72 new applications for grants and turned down one application," fund director Jamal Al Bah said.

"That one was rejected because the dowry involved is as high as 120,000 dirhams (\$32,700) and this contravenes the fund's objectives and policies."

High dowries, the money paid by a bridegroom to his bride under Islamic law, have forced men in the UAE and other oil-rich Gulf states to look abroad for cheaper brides, mainly to Egypt and India.

But officials have criticised such marriages saying many local women are being left spinsters and most of mixed marriages end in divorce because of different traditions and languages.

Fund officials say their work is having a positive result with an increase in local marriages.

So far it has given out nearly 200 million dirhams (\$54.5 million) in grants. It has also organised seminars and is planning to launch an awareness campaign in schools.

Police kill 4 suspected extremists in S. Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies) — Police shot and killed four suspected Islamic militants in a dawn raid Friday in southern Al Minya province, security officials said.

In a separate incident late Thursday, suspected Muslim extremists gunned down a Coptic Christian in his home in a village near Mallawi, 260 kilometres south of Cairo.

The victim was identified as Agabi Yousef Milad, 45.

In Friday's raid, police forces acting on a tip stormed an apartment where the four extremists were hiding in Al Adwa town in Minya province, 220 kilometres south of Cairo.

Local security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said police seized several submachine guns and makeshift bombs. They also arrested six men believed to have taken part in the extremists attacks on police, the officials said.

Muslim extremists have waged a campaign of violence since the spring of 1992 to try to overthrow Egypt's secular government and replace it with strict Islamic rule.

The killing of four raised the death toll in three years of violence to nearly 600.

The raids were carried out after security forces learned from militant leaders who had given themselves up earlier in the week that fundamentalists "planned to step up attacks in Minya province," police said.

A total of 598 people — including militants, policemen, Christians and tourists — have died since March 1992 when militants launched a campaign of violence aimed at toppling the secular government of president Hosni Mubarak.

Comprehensive peace is U.S. priority —Pelletreau

WASHINGTON (USIA) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau reiterated that "a comprehensive and just peace" remains the Clinton administration's top priority for the coming year.

The senior State Department official was given an "overview" of U.S. policy goals and achievements in the Middle East in a briefing for reporters at the Foreign Press Centre on Thursday.

He noted that over the last 16 months there has been "steady progress" toward the goal of an Arab-Israeli settlement, "and we hope that in the year ahead we will be able to register further progress."

Mr. Pelletreau, who was to travel to the Middle East this weekend, said that the United States will in the coming months try "to build and maintain" security arrangements that "assure stability in the Gulf region and continuing access to its petroleum resources."

These, he said, are vital to the world's economic prosperity.

He added that the United States will remain "vigilant" to prevent Iraq and Iran from threatening regional security and will work on "bolstering the collective defence capabilities" of the Gulf's Arab states.

The United States, he added, will continue to press for Iraqi compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions and to make Iran "a good neighbour rather than an aggressive neighbour in the region."

He described the recent meeting of Algerian opposition leaders in Rome as "a significant event," and added that the Clinton administration continues to counsel the Algerian leaders on the path toward political dialogue and a return to political process.

3 Filipinos in Saudi killings executed

RIYADH (AP) — Three Filipinos were killed in Saudi Arabia last week, and two of the victims' relatives in a Saudi court were sentenced to death for the killings.

The court, which is based in Riyadh, sentenced the two men to death by hanging for the killings of two Filipinos in a hotel in the capital, Riyadh.

The court also sentenced a woman to death for the killing of a Filipino in a hotel in the capital, Riyadh.

The court also sentenced a woman to death for the killing of a Filipino in a hotel in the capital, Riyadh.

say why two were strung up, but the third was not.

The display aimed to underscore the punishment and act as a deterrent. It is derived from Islamic law, by which Saudi Arabia rules.

Cases passing through Saudi Arabia's Islamic courts often take years to conclude. However, this case, which provoked national outrage, sped through the courts in less than three months.

The Filipinos reportedly sought \$10 million ransom when they stormed the Rajah mansion Oct. 22, first killing a male and a female Indonesian servant.

They then broke into the room where Mr. Rajah's wife, two small children and

another maid were hiding, and held them hostage under threat of death.

Police surrounded the house and tried to negotiate for the release of the hostages, with the help of a Philippines embassy staffer, according to an Interior Ministry statement at the time.

But the Filipinos, who also sought arms and safe transport outside the country for themselves and the hostages, killed one child and stabbed their other hostages to prove their threats.

Police then stormed the room and were violently resisted by the kidnappers, one of whom was killed.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

7:00-7:15

De La Salle Church Tel. 601357
Terrasanta Church Tel. 625696
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
625641
Anglican Church Tel. 654551, Tel.
625643

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
717351
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
752592
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717591
Armenian International Church Tel.
652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624525
German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel. 604133
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 649012
Church of Nazareth Tel. 615691
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman

Tel. 811295
Fajr
(Summer) Duha
Dhuhr
Asr
Maghrib
Isha

PRAYER TIMES

WEATHER

Bulkum supplied by the Depart-
ment of Meteorology

Sky will be partly cloudy with a
chance of showers in the northern
and central parts of the kingdom,
and winds westerly light to moder-
ate. In Aqaba, winds will be north-
easterly moderate nor westerly calm.

Min. Max. Time
Amman 12-21
Aqaba 12-20
Djorah 12-13
Jordan Valley 12-19

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Amman Tel. 601357
A Cathedral of God Church, Tel.
625696
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperature:
Amman 10, Aqaba 16 Humidity
readings: Amman 14 per cent,
Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Jamil Marada 761249
Dr. Nidal Asjad 761672
Dr. Khalid Wafar 743699
Dr. Ghazi Abdulhadi 845406
Fino pharmacy 691912
Fardous pharmacy 761236
Al Asma pharmacy 671695
Naturol pharmacy 621675
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644845
Shimshani pharmacy 637696
Najib pharmacy 647632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammed Al Hilo 279773
Alquds pharmacy 1-1

ZARQA:
Dr. Farah Haddad 967255
Khalef pharmacy 958412

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate

Roads 625041
Civil Defence Emergency 109
Fire Brigade 637777
First Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 675121
Highway Police 643402
Traffic Police 596300
Police Security Department 636021
Hospital Complaints 606600
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information
Administration Complaints 121
Overseas Calls 019230
Central Amman Telephone
Reception 623101
Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority

815415
Electric Power
Company 636381

KG Flight Information 06-55320
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn
6428146

Akshah Maternity, J. Amn 643412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malham, J. Amn 636140
Falcone, Shmoun 6641714
Shmoun Hospital 669131
University Hospital 643845
Al-Mushter Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66412737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6941666
Bakran, Al-Muhtareen 7771012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Arnn, Marka 81916125
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 049983323
Zarqa Nat. Nat. Hospital
..... 049902560
..... 049986732
Al-Jazeera Modern Hospital 04999090

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02127555
Great Catholic Hospital 02127223

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 02127100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 073134111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia In-
ternational Airport Tel. (06)53200-
5, where it should always be ver-
ified.

AIRRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)

06:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:15 Aqaba (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:45 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 Cairo (RJ)
17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
8:15 London, Aqaba (RJ)

Information minister pledges more cooperation with press

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khaled Karaki has pledged more support and cooperation with the press and its institutions and has called for enhancing dialogue between the government and the press to promote more freedoms in the country, according to the Jordan Press Association's (JPA) President Suleiman Qudrah.

In a meeting Thursday with JPA's council, Dr. Karaki stressed the importance of the freedom of the press within the framework of the country's national interests and objectives. He said journalists should try to protect freedoms granted by the law without infringing on Arab and Islamic traditions and culture.

Dr. Karaki was referring to the three weeklies, Al Bilad, Shihani and Hawadeth Al Sah, that were accused of publishing information and material that infringe upon "public morals."

The three weeklies, which have a wide circulation rate, were under heavy attack in the last few weeks for publishing photographs of semi-naked women and sensational stories that JPA claims were baseless and fabricated.

"In the study we (the JPA) carried out on the three weeklies we discovered that some stories were fabricated," Mr. Al Qudrah said. "But there should be a reevaluation of the way the local press operates in general."

The JPA president said the meeting with Dr. Karaki focused on enhancing cooperation between the government, the press and the association, but stressed there should not be any leniency towards "moral violations" and the publication of scandalous and defamatory stories.



Khaled Karaki



Suleiman Qudrah

dals and rumours. However, Mr. Qudrah stressed the importance of the role of the judiciary in press violations. He said all cases are now referred to the courts to have a final say, which "does not always work to our advantage. Nevertheless, it is a positive step in the history of our press."

Several cases are now filed against some newspapers for alleged violations of the press and publications law enacted in 1993. Despite criticism by some weeklies and journalists over the many gaps they see as existing in the new law, there are no indications of the government's intention to amend the law in the near future, observers say.

At present, the main concern is JPA's law which is currently being studied by the Judiciary Committee of the Lower House of Parliament. "The present law does not incorporate the necessities of the new stage," Mr. Qudrah said. "There is no harmony between the Press and Publications Law, the Political Parties Law and the association's law. It should be changed."

JPA is abiding by a 1983 temporary law that replaced the association's original law

enacted in 1953. The present law does not give membership to journalists working in partisan newspapers. Although the weekly newspaper, Al Sabeel, reflects the policies of the Islamic Action Front party, Mr. Qudrah said the JPA does not consider it a partisan paper. All other partisan newspapers are licensed, but are not JPA members.

Mr. Qudrah said the meeting also tackled the situation of journalists working at the Jordan News Agency, Petra. Although it is a government institution, Petra is not included in the Civil Service Law, and employees do not enjoy the benefits and raises that other governmental institutions do.

Also on the meeting's agenda was JPA's preparations for the general conference of the International Organisation for Journalists to be held here on Jan. 28 and attended by journalists from more than 110 countries.

The conference, which is convening in Jordan for the first time will focus on press freedoms and conditions of journalists worldwide, and will include a special session on women and journalism.

Head of reform Zionists group ends visit promising to secure support for Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The president of the Association of Reformed Zionists of America Amal Hirsch and an accompanying association delegation wound up a several-day visit to Jordan Friday by promising to intensify efforts in the U.S. Congress and in the media to ensure continued and increasing support for Jordan.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, before his departure for home, Mr. Hirsch said that his association would also urge the world community to provide

continued moral and financial support to Jordan as a part of the Middle East peace programme.

Mr. Hirsch said that Jordan was in need of assistance to activate its national economy and to raise the standard of living of its people, and any help to the Kingdom would "reflect positively on the peace process, according to Petra."

Mr. Hirsch and his delegation last Monday met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and discussed the Middle East as well as

prospects for increased aid to the Kingdom.

The visiting American team ended a tour of the region designed to study the implementation of the peace process and discuss the obstacles in its way, said the agency.

It quoted Mr. Hirsch as saying that his association of 1.5 million members will now embark on a wide-scale campaign inside the United States to mobilise political and economic assistance for the peace process, adding that Jordan's role is consid-

ered pivotal in the success of the peace process.

Mr. Hirsch said that his association would immediately start contacts with congressional members, the media and American decision-makers to ensure the flow of economic assistance to the Kingdom, recalling that President Bill Clinton promised aid to Jordan during his visit to the Kingdom last October.

Stressing the need for the exchange of land for peace, Mr. Hirsch said that his association supported the government of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and its plans for peace with the Arab countries.

Voicing his association's support for Jordan's stand, Mr. Hirsch said that, for peace to endure, all elements of anxiety, fear of conflict and other negative elements should be removed.

The Crown Prince had told Mr. Hirsch and his team that there was a need to base peace in the Middle East on material guarantees that would reflect positively on the lives of people in the region.

First explosives plant to start up in April

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The first Jordanian plant producing commercial explosives is expected to go on stream in April, plugging another gap in a commodity that is seen to be a major factor in the Kingdom's economic development.

Initial production of the chemical and mining company will be "commercial explosives which are used in road building, excavations, quarries and clearing areas to construct dams," Dr. Fakhouri said. He added that the company did not plan to produce explosives for military purposes.

Jordan is planning to build several thousand kilometres of roads and dozens of dams in the next few years to cope with expected rise in demand for transport facilities and water. The phosphate mining industry, which is gearing to increase its production to cope with the needs of fertilizer plants coming up in the south, is expected to be one of the major buyers of the company's products.

"Eventually, the area will house six or seven plants producing a series of chemicals that Jordanian industries need," Dr. Fakhouri told the Jordan Times.

The chemical and mining company is a private sector company with public sector participation. The government-owned Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Industrial Development Bank hold 20 per cent and 10 per cent respectively of the company's JD 1 million capital, and the private sector holds the rest.

The plant is being built by the Indo-Burma Petrochemicals Company and is expected to be commissioned and ready for production in April, Dr. Fakhouri said. The Indo-Burma Petrochemicals Company, an India-based firm, will also operate the company's production facilities for a period of five years under a turnkey contract worth \$700,000.

The total cost of the plant is JD 1 million, including the civil works provided by the company, Dr. Fakhouri said. Jordan's present need of explosives is worth about \$4 million every year and the Kingdom imports the products from India, Pakistan and several other Asian countries. A limited quantity of explosives are also mixed

locally. The local production — mostly involving manual work — is expected to be completely eliminated when the new plant starts production.

Dr. Fakhouri said the company was well aware of environmental concerns that go hand in hand with any plant producing explosives and had opted for a technology that does not involve high-pollutant nitrogen-content raw material.

He said the planned facility to produce detonator fuses would have an annual production capacity of five million metres and "we hope that plant will start producing in the last three months of 1995."

Police arrest suspects in dinar forgery scheme

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police have arrested an unspecified number of suspects in connection with the forgery of JD 20 dinar notes and would announce the details of the affair soon, said Friday.

They confirmed reports in the local press that the arrests took place early this week, and that a quantity of the counterfeit currency was seized.

Closer details of the case were not immediately available and police sources declined to elaborate.

According to the reports, a large group was behind the forgery, described as the largest operation of its kind in the country, and some of its members were arrested while in possession of the counterfeit currency.

However, Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) officials and police said that the group did not manage to market any sizeable volume of the forged notes.

Walid Khairallah, deputy governor of the CBJ, said only a limited quantity of the forged notes appeared to have entered the market, and that the counterfeit was easily detectable because of poor quality. The paper used for the counterfeit was also distinct from the regular paper used to print currencies.

Mr. Khairallah, in a statement carried in the local press, said attempts were made earlier to forge JD 20 notes and were thwarted, and that some had also tried to forge JD 10 bills.

On Monday, the CBJ

issued the warning over the latest forgery and gave the details of the distinguishing differences between the genuine and counterfeit bills.

In a memorandum it sent to banks and financial institutions that deal with banknotes, the CBJ provided more details of the differences, reports said.

These included, in addition to the texture of the paper, difference in sizes: — The picture in the water mark of the forged note is not clear or missing altogether; — The colours on the reproduction of the photos of His Majesty King Hussein and the Dome of the Rock on the two sides of the forged note are either too light or too black.

— The silver metallic band on the face of the forgery is wider than the genuine bill; and — The logo "Central Bank of Jordan" that appears in the middle of the genuine bill is missing in the forgery.

Most moneychangers said they had not come across the forgery, substantiating the authorities' belief that only a limited volume of the counterfeit had entered the market.

In another case, a local report said police were searching for an Arab national who had handed over counterfeit \$100 bills to some people in downtown Amman before disappearing. The case came to light when those who received the notes wanted to change it and were arrested promptly because the currency was forged.

Further details of the bizarre case were not immediately available.

RJ commercialisation in progress; but regional coalitions being studied

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Commercialisation of Royal Jordanian (RJ) has begun, but deregulation, liberalisation and mergers of major international airlines are forcing it to consider coalitions with other regional airlines, say RJ officials.

Commercialisation began recently with a shares sale of Alia Gateway Hotel and the duty free shop at Queen Alia International Airport (QALIA). RJ Executive Assistant Munib Toukan told the Jordan Times, Friday.

"Seventy-five per cent of the hotel and 25 per cent of the duty free shop were sold about 10 days ago," to two government-guided agencies: The Social Security Corporation and the Corporation for Development of Tourism, Mr. Toukan said.

Commercialisation of RJ is the first step towards eventual privatisation which should be achieved within the next two years, according to RJ officials who addressed last month's annual sales and marketing conference.

Commercialisation is being pursued to make the national carrier more attractive to prospective investors.

The hotel and the duty free shop will be jointly administered by Royal Jordanian and the government-guided agencies, Mr. Toukan said, adding that a board of directors will soon be appointed.

Mr. Toukan confirmed that development of four

new duty free outlets in the baggage claim areas is in progress; two of them will be open 24 hours.

"The four new duty free shops are to enhance sales and to provide more services to passengers," he said. No date has been set for the opening.

Further commercialisation proposals of the catering and training facilities, maintenance and all cargo operations were announced in December.

Earlier this month the Arab Airlines Carriers Organisation (AACO) Planning and Economic Affairs Committee met to discuss the feasibility of future coalitions.

"Through mergers or cooperation with other airlines in the region we will be able to be more competitive. A single bloc would operate like the bloc formed by European airlines," AACO Planning and Economic Affairs Committee Chairman Ihsan Naghaway told the Jordan Times.

During the meeting a strategy for Arab airlines to confront and overcome challenges facing the Arab World's air transport industry was discussed, he said.

These challenges have been created by liberalisation, globalisation and regional unities of the major international airlines, Mr. Naghaway said.

Open sky policies, which have led to a price war in Europe and North America, have rendered Royal Jordanian unable to negotiate favourable rates for flight paths, fuel, handling and landing fees through-

out the world, Mr. Naghaway said.

Royal Jordanian, among many other airlines, is subject to higher fuel prices in Europe than the bloc of European airlines, although they use the same supplier, he cited as an example.

This policy will also allow any airline to fly here direct.

"By creating a bloc of Arab airlines, everything would be less costly for us," he said, adding that this would enable fare prices to be more competitive.

Each of the 18 Arab carriers is a member of the AACO, but only nine were represented at the meeting: Saudia, Gulf, Egypt, Emirates, Yemen, Middle East, Kuwait, Sudan and Royal Jordanian airlines.

One strategy of the proposed bloc would be to "head towards privatisation," he said, as privatisation would "ultimately benefit the customers."

Privatisation, however, remains in the hands of the internal policy-makers of each individual airline. Mr. Naghaway said, but he asserted: "We as a committee (AACO Planning and Economic Affairs Committee) promote privatisation."

Of RJ's own moves towards privatisation, Mr. Naghaway said that the airline was progressing steadily towards that goal.

The meeting's proposals, Mr. Naghaway added, will be summed up and presented to AACO chief executives for approval and future implementation.

Government promises to improve retired servicemen's conditions

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government has promised to help improve the living conditions of the retired servicemen and has set up a committee at the Ministry of Finance to draw up a related plan, said Aref Oteibi, head of a panel representing the retired officers.

In a statement to the Jordan Times Friday, one day after the committee's meeting with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Mr. Oteibi said Sharif Zeid has promised to consider all the requests presented to him by the committee in the form of

a working paper.

"We have demanded that the government increase the pension of the retired servicemen in view of the high cost of living, that it consult with the committee before taking decisions concerning the Armed Forces pensioners, that the funds allocated for aid to the children of martyrs be increased and that housing be provided to retired servicemen with low incomes and who have no homes," said Mr. Oteibi.

He said the committee also requested that the government participate in projects carried out by the Jordanian Economic and Social Orga-

nisation for Retired Servicemen (JESORS) and help it to succeed by providing funds, equipment and expertise from the Armed Forces.

He said JESORS, which was established by the government, was not operating successfully and required assistance from the government.

Mr. Oteibi who retired with the rank of brigadier said that his 38-member committee came into being at the first convention of retired officers held at last month and was charged with following up matters related to improve the living conditions of the retired servicemen.

Tete Montoliu to present 'menu of jazz perennials'

By Jennifer Hamarneh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — So far the new year's line up of guest artists being brought to Jordan points to a 1995 of standing-room-only performances. Jazz addicts are in for a major treat Monday night, when the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Instituto Cervantes will present "the unfettered lyricism of Spanish keyboard master Tete Montoliu."

Born Vicens Montoliu Massana in Barcelona in 1933, Tete's life-long musical career spiralled in style, format and distance. In 1955 he played with Lionel Hampton during the famous vibre player's concert in Barcelona. So impressed was Hampton with the young Spanish pianist who was tutored by Don Byas, that he hired him on the spot for a short concert tour in France.

In the mid-60s he met with great success playing for nearly three months at New York's famous Village Gate. His popularity soared in Europe during the 70s and in 1979 he toured the U.S. His American audiences demanded an encore tour in 1980 during which he recorded live the famous "Bostons Concert," one of his more celebrated albums.

In the 80s he toured Europe, the U.S. and



Tete Montoliu

four decades. He swings as consistently as any pianist who ever grew up outside the native land of jazz.

On a hot Wednesday night in Café de Copain, Tete made his Toronto debut. The Canadian daily, The Globe and Mail, described Tete as having "various things up his sleeve, quite possibly an extra pair of hands and certainly a rich, almost mischievous, sense of humour. His imagination must be seething with ideas, but his playing seems entirely unhurried. ... With midnight approaching, a hot packed house café was obviously hanging onto every note."

Tete Montoliu's solo recital will be performed at the Philadelphia Hotel at 8:00 p.m.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Lecture entitled "Synthesis of the History of the Muslims in Spain" by Dr. Fares Al-Fayez at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre) at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Seminar (in Arabic) entitled "Does Israel Really Want Normalisation?" with the participants of Bahjat Abu Gharbieh, Fakhri Qu'war, and Taher 'Udwan, at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Poetry recital by Rashid Issa at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.
- ★ Exhibition of works by Iraqi artist Fakhir Muhammad at the Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of "Arab Contemporary Art" at Mona Saudi studio, Abdoun village (Tel. 829700).
- ★ Exhibition of the works of Lebanese artist Amin Al Basha at Darat Al Funnun. Also showing another exhibition entitled "Phase II-Doors and Windows" by Jordanian artist Ghada Dahdaleh and works by contemporary Arab artists.
- ★ Exhibition of works by Spanish artist Covadonga Sarraquia at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).
- ★ Educational works depicting the life of "Voltaire" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of works by Hala Mahayni at the Petra International Hotel in Aqaba.
- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by Zakaria Barakat at the Housing Bank Gallery.

Inspection bureau finds 310 government department violations

AMMAN (Petra) — The Administrative and Inspection Bureau last year discovered 310 violations by government departments and saved JD 1,333,765 of state funds in the process, according to acting head of the bureau Eid Shakhaneh Friday.

Reporting on the bureau's activities during 1994, Dr. Shakhaneh said that his department examined the financial and administrative situations of 24 different government ministries and departments where it found some violations and preempted the

implementation of certain measures, saving the country funds that could have been unnecessarily wasted.

Dr. Shakhaneh said that the violations were found by bureau inspection teams in procurement and purchase units, in spending on scholarships and training, in implementation of the departments' projects and in other areas.

The bureau last year received 327 complaints from civil servants on unorthodox administrative activities in

their departments and has dealt with 70 cases so far.

Apart from dealing with complaints and violations, the bureau participated in several government departments' studies of laws and regulations recommended to reform the public administration system, Dr. Shakhaneh said.

He said the bureau's activities extended beyond the government's offices and dealt with companies in which the government has invested capital.

SSC's 1994 investments total JD 97m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) last year invested JD 97 million in different projects in Jordan, thus raising to JD 642 million the corporation's total investments, according to a SSC report Friday.

The report said the total investments earned JD 223.4 million in profits since the creation of the SSC in 1980 to the end of 1994.

In 1994 the SSC registered another 1,200 companies and

institutions, raising to 9,200 the total number of organisations covered by the corporation, said the report which added that 280,000 workers in the government and private sectors are now covered by the SSC.

Mandela: Indemnity row resolved

PRETORIA (R) — President Nelson Mandela said Friday a row over apartheid-era indemnities threatening the stability of South Africa's national unity government had been resolved in talks with his deputy, F.W. De Klerk.

"We will be issuing a statement this afternoon. You will see from the statement that the issue has been resolved," he told reporters after talks with Mr. De Klerk at the union buildings in Pretoria.

"Let bygones be bygones, the important point is that Deputy President De Klerk and I have made very good progress," he said, without elaborating.

The meeting was called after Mr. De Klerk said a serious crisis had erupted over the indemnity issue, prompting reports that he might withdraw from the nine-month-old administration.

Before taking part in the

talks, Mr. De Klerk told reporters the resignation reports were incorrect.

"I would like to correct that...I said: 'We should leave the government,' and that my ministers convinced me I should not. That is absolutely incorrect. I said we should seriously consider all the options," a relaxed-looking De Klerk said, without elaborating.

Mr. De Klerk was holding talks with fellow Deputy President Thabo Mbeki Friday afternoon and was not available for comment.

On Thursday night Mr. De Klerk launched a blistering attack on Mr. Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), telling the opening session of his National Party's annual congress there was a "serious crisis" in the government.

The National Party is a junior government partner of

the ANC. During Wednesday's cabinet meeting ANC ministers had "viciously insulted" him and his party over the issue of indemnity for politically-motivated crimes and their attitude to a programme of reconstruction and development, he said.

"The attack was unfair, unjustified and totally unacceptable. It was so serious that I felt myself obliged to inform the cabinet that I would have to reconsider my position," Mr. De Klerk said in his speech.

"The ANC leadership will have to take appropriate steps, without delay, to remedy the unfair, unjustified and unacceptable attack on our integrity and good faith," he said.

The ANC-led cabinet Wednesday decided immunity from prosecution for apartheid crimes for two former

ministers and 3,500 policemen had never been granted. The party had accused Mr. De Klerk's former government of trying to cover up human rights abuses by wanting indemnity for the policemen, their former Minister Adriaan Vlok and ex-Defence Minister Magnus Malan.

But Mr. De Klerk said similar amnesties were granted to several thousand ANC members and accused Mr. Mandela's party of setting double standards.

Mr. De Klerk also said in his speech to the party that the crisis went much deeper than a row over indemnity for apartheid crimes and that "a fresh start" was needed. This was the motivation behind Friday's meeting.

"If the reaction is positive the government of national unity will, I hope, soon continue with the good work that has already begun."

Death toll tops 200 in frozen Kashmir, 400 trapped

JAMMU, India (AFP) — Indian army troops were drawing up plans Friday to rescue some 400 people trapped in a snow-blocked mountain tunnel in Kashmir as the death toll topped 200 in the frozen Indian state, officials said.

Army engineers ruled out an early rescue of the travellers stranded in the two-kilometre Jawahar Tunnel near the town of Banihal saying a heavy snowstorm in the northern state was hampering their efforts.

The engineers were trying to establish a communications link with the unlit icy tunnel some 200 kilometres north of Jammu to coordinate rescue attempts, military officers told AFP here.

"It is their only hope," one officer said of the estimated 400 people trapped inside the

tunnel located on the main highway between Jammu, the Kashmir winter capital, and Srinagar, the state summer capital.

Several thousand people have been stranded inside their vehicles in sub-zero temperatures on the 300-kilometre Jammu-Srinagar Highway, served by avalanches and snowstorms, according to government officials here.

Military helicopters continued Friday to drop food, medicine, blankets, tea, powdered milk and kerosene to travellers on the highway, some of whom have been stranded for up to four days inside their vehicles.

Indian soldiers have rescued some 5,000 people across the state during the

past two days, a government spokesman said.

B.R. Kundal, chief administrator of Jammu, said rescuees managed to evacuate 400 passengers from 24 buses during the past 24 hours in a stepped-up operation to save lives in the Himalayan state.

A search was ordered Friday for more than 40 bus passengers believed to be stranded near a deserted army post along the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, the only road link between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country.

Asked about reports by other government officials that at least 210 people have died, Mr. Kundal said: "The toll could be more, but I cannot give you exact details."

He said there was confusion regarding the number of casualties because communications links have been snapped by the heavy snows.

A Kashmir government official in Srinagar said earlier that 146 bodies had been recovered since Monday, when the first of a series of avalanches flattened a wireless station near Banihal killing 11 policemen and three civilians.

He said another 50 bodies had been spotted near the blocked tunnel.

The state administration has set up a control room in Srinagar and Jammu to coordinate rescue operations and asked military engineers to use bulldozers and snowmobiles to help clear blocked highways and roads.

Democrats are trying to destroy me — Gingrich

WASHINGTON (R) — Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich accused Democrats of plotting his destruction as the U.S. House of Representatives dissolved into partisan shouting matches for a second straight day.

A brief attempt at bipartisan congressional harmony blew away on gusts of angry rhetoric as Democrats — accustomed to rule but now in the minority thanks to the November elections — accused Republicans of smothering criticism of Mr. Gingrich over a potentially lucrative book deal they find unseemly.

The pugna Gingrich, a seasoned political brawler and the first Republican House speaker in 40 years, dismissed the howling as Democratic chafing over minority status and the book furore as part of revenge strategy.

"There is a small group of people so bitter about losing control of the House that they have decided that any device which destroys me is legitimate," he said.

Mr. Gingrich said that was the main point underlying a newspaper article by a sym-

pathetic conservative columnist, Robert Novak, who is among those suggesting Mr. Gingrich might be wise to give up the book contract and thus undercut his critics and defuse the whole issue.

But the speaker dug in. "I am going to write a book, I think I have a right to write a book," he said — and added: "I think a strategy based on the personal destruction of somebody is pretty amazing... pretty sobering."

Democrats make no secret of their dislike of Mr. Gingrich, who helped Republicans gain control of the House by attacking Democrats on ethical grounds. He helped force the resignation of Democratic Speaker Jim Wright in 1989 over Mr. Wright's own book deal, and portrayed the Democratic-led House as corrupt.

Mr. Novak, a syndicated columnist well connected in Republican circles, wrote that some Republicans are also upset about the book contract between Mr. Gingrich and a publishing house owned by Australian media magnate Rupert Murdoch.

Under public pressure, Mr.

Gingrich recently announced he would forego a \$4.5 million advance for the two-book deal and take instead only a \$1 advance plus royalties on sales — still potentially worth plenty if the books become best-sellers.

Holding up a \$1 bill for the cameras Thursday to underscore that point, he defended the deal and a recently disclosed private meeting he had with Mr. Murdoch weeks before the contract was sealed. Critics have seized upon the meeting as an impropriety because Mr. Murdoch's ownership of the Fox Television channel is being challenged before federal regulators.

Mr. Gingrich said he and Mr. Murdoch did not discuss legislation and asserted that, if he gave up the book contract, foes would just find other grounds for attack.

At a separate news conference, Republican Party Chairman Haley Barbour accused the White House of orchestrating a campaign of character assassination against Mr. Gingrich.

"Perhaps you think this strategy, which is an obvious strategy, is being done with-

out the White House's knowledge or direction," Mr. Barbour said. "You may be right but I doubt it. I was born at night but it wasn't last night."

The whole row again spilled over onto the House floor where, on Wednesday, Republicans forced through a reprimand of a Democratic member who had criticised Mr. Gingrich for the book deal and got some of her remarks stricken from the record.

Democrats angrily accused Republicans of breaking House rules they had pushed through just weeks ago designed to limit changes in the record, and of seeking to quash criticism.

"I hope the rules do not gag members of Congress," said minority leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri. "I hope we're not going to abuse the power of running the House."

The wrangling was a reverse image of bitter days in the mid-1980s when conservative Republicans, led by Gingrich, accused the then-majority Democrats of cutting off debate and imposing tight rules to shut off dissent.

Japan quake sends parties dancing for votes

TOKYO (Agencies) — The Kobe earthquake has sent Japan's political parties to the streets to raise funds for victims, but the move has met with skepticism and is seen more as a publicity stunt ahead of national elections this year.

The newly established big opposition party, Shinshinto (New Frontier Party), complained that its relief drive was not getting the same amount of media attention as the limelight surrounding the ruling coalition.

"I have the impression that media coverage of our party has been too scanty," Toru Terai, a public relations official with Shinshinto said.

"We wish the media would report fairly about how we are dealing with the matter."

Leaders from different political parties led the launch of fund-raising campaigns Thursday, but some newspapers called it a "performance" to gain popularity ahead of local elections in April and Senate polls in July.

Shinshinto was formed last month by conservative and centrist groups against the ruling coalition, which joined the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Socialists in a political marriage of convenience in June.

quake. But the trip was not given much space in the news.

In contrast, a media circus followed Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama when he visited the quake-hit area Thursday amid criticism that his government was working too slowly to rescue operations.

Mr. Terai said that party leaders had assessed the catastrophe "with their own eyes" and made specific suggestions to the government about relief measures. "I wonder if the government has acted swiftly," he said.

Meanwhile, members of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's squabbling Socialist Party are burying the hatchet for now and pressures for an early election are receding as Japan reels from the tragedy of Tuesday's huge earthquake.

But analysts say the truce will at best just postpone party headaches. The mammoth quake, the worst to strike Japan in more than 70 years, has left over 4,000 dead. Survivors Friday were still struggling with food and water shortages. Much of the infrastructure in the hard-hit port city of Kobe was in ruins.

Faced with the misery and devastation, politicians are leery of proceeding with what voters would view as selfish manoeuvring at a stunned nation's expense.

A rebel band in Prime Minister Murayama's Socialist Party has frozen plans to

set up a separate parliamentary group, a move many see as a prelude to a party split.

"Both the party's Central Executive Committee and we ourselves believe that what we need to do now is focus together as a party and focus on disaster relief and reconstruction measures," an aide to Mr. Yamahana told Reuters.

"We don't know how long the situation will last, but there are important issues to be dealt with, such as passing a supplementary budget for earthquake-related funds. So at least until that is done, both the Socialists and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) need to work together."

Five of Mr. Yamahana's group of 24 potential defectors are from Kobe's home prefecture of Hyogo. Another two are from neighbouring Osaka, analysts said. "The last thing they would want now is to destabilise the government," said John Neuffer, a senior research fellow at the Mitsui Marine Research Institute. "The emphasis is on getting money into the district."

Before the quake struck Tuesday, some Liberal Democrats had been muttering that a snap election in April might be their best bet. Others were eyeing lower house elections in July in tandem with scheduled upper house polls.

"Some politicians were talking about lower house

elections in April when nationwide local elections are scheduled and others about twinning the general election with the upper house election. Now they are saying the election should be put off," said Rikkyo University political scientist Muneyuki Shindo.

Mr. Yamahana's rebels had threatened to bolt from the party; if Mr. Murayama's mainstream backers remained opposed to their demand for an early transformation of the Socialists into a distinct party with a better chance of survival in coming elections.

The Socialists, who recanted most of their traditional platform when they joined forces with the LDP, are scrambling for ways to appeal to voters alienated from both the LDP and the conservative opposition in the New Frontier Party (NFP).

Analysts said the earthquake's political fallout would also make it hard for the NFP to attack the ruling coalition in ways that would delay quake relief or destabilise the government.

But an aide to one NFP politician said talk of a "political truce" was exaggerated. "Some people say there should be a truce because of the earthquake, but that is not parliament's role," the aide told Reuters. "There are issues to be discussed including delays in the government's response to the quake."

reduced to rubble by the

Hope fades for quick release of Burma's Suu Kyi

BANGKOK (R) — Hopes for the imminent release of Burma's dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi faded as the Rangoon junta said she would be freed only when a constitution now being written is complete.

Rangoon-based diplomats said Friday it could take three years before the drawn-out constitutional process reaches a conclusion, but pointed out that under the regime's own laws Mrs. Suu Kyi's sentence expires in July.

Thai Foreign Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Thursday upon his return from Rangoon that he had asked Burma's ruling generals about the detained democracy leader and had been told the constitutional convention must finish its work first.

"They will not release her until the constitution is complete," Mr. Thaksin told reporters.

That convention, which has been drawing up the basic guidelines of a new charter under the junta's wing since January 1993, has so far completed only three of the 15 sections the constitution is to consist of.

One Rangoon-based diplomat said it was not clear what the junta meant when it said the constitution must be completed before the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate is released.

"It is going to be when the guidelines are finished, or when the constitution is written, or promulgated, or after the first election under a new constitution and a parliament is sitting," he said. "That could be three years down the line."

Junta Chairman General Than Shwe and the powerful head of Burma's military intelligence, Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt, met Mrs. Suu Kyi for the first time last September.

The 49-year-old daughter of Burmese independence hero Aung San had a second meeting with Gen. Khin Nyunt in October, fuelling speculation her release might be imminent.

That speculation was further fuelled by mixed signals coming from the secretive junta — the State Law and Order Restoration (SLOROC), another diplomat said.

"Some of them were saying they didn't want to hold her beyond January and people seized on those dates but it was never a fixed deadline," he said.

Mrs. Suu Kyi was first detained under house arrest in July 1989, on vague charges of endangering the state.

Under the military government's own law a period of house arrest can last a maximum of five years. But a senior junta official said last year her first year of detention was an "arrest period" and her period of detention began only in July 1990.

"There was never any doubt that the deadline was July this year," one of the diplomats said.

But one Bangkok-based diplomat said the SLOROC might detain her indefinitely. "They've dropped hints recently that they feel they can keep her as long as they want," he said.

"The political considerations will be more important than the legal," said another. Mrs. Suu Kyi emerged as a charismatic leader of a pro-democracy uprising that swept Burma in 1988 and was only put down by the military with the deaths of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people.

The National League for Democracy which Mrs. Suu Kyi co-founded swept more than 80 per cent of the seats in May 1990 elections, but the SLOROC ignored the results, claiming a new constitution had to be drawn up before any transfer of power to a civilian government could occur.

Mrs. Suu Kyi, who has refused the SLOROC's offer to set her free if she leaves Burma, won the Nobel Prize for her non-violent campaign for democracy.

Meanwhile BBC Television reported that Burma's military government is forcing tens of thousands of people to labour without pay on tourism projects, turning the country into a vast slave camp.

Mexico police break up protest with tear-gas

VILLAHERMOSA, Mexico (R) — Police firing tear-gas Thursday broke up a clash between supporters of Mexico's ruling party and leftist opposition protesters in the central square of Villahermosa, the capital of southeastern Tabasco state, the government news agency said.

Several people were hurt by stones thrown during the clash which began when supporters of Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) Governor Roberto Madrazo appeared at an opposition protest against him.

Protesters and several reporters at the scene suffered from tear-gas inhalation, the Mexican news agency (Notimex) said. Other unconfirmed reports said PRI supporters may have thrown some of the tear-gas grenades which cleared the square.

Earlier, angry PRI supporters blocked roadways and closed businesses in Villahermosa to protest government plans for new elections in the state, saying they believe the government of President Ernesto Zedillo is

trying to make Mr. Madrazo step down.

Mr. Madrazo was elected last November but his victory was marred by charges by the leftist opposition Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) of voting fraud.

The protests were the first test by Mr. Zedillo's pledge this week to reach a comprehensive deal with all Mexico's main political parties to overhaul the electoral system and put an end to constant suspicions of fraud in favour of the PRI.

As part of that deal signed by Mr. Zedillo and the main political parties Tuesday officials had said the government is willing to hold new elections in Tabasco and the nearby state of Chiapas where Maya Indian rebels are demanding Governor Eduardo Robledo also step down.

The new polls would likely take place after the existing election system had been thoroughly overhauled in the coming months to increase confidence in its independence from the ruling party, officials say.

Treatment of asylum seekers in U.K. condemned

LONDON (AP) — A report Friday said Britain's treatment of political asylum seekers, refugees and migrants is appalling and accused the government of overall lack of concern for their rights.

The report published by the human rights group Liberty Echo points in a report in October by Amnesty International which said Britain's practice of locking up large numbers of asylum seekers indefinitely without access to courts violates international law.

Friday's Liberty report, published with the backing of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, said that an average of 1,500 people were detained under British deportation powers each year between 1989 and 1994.

The report, "the last resort: violations of the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers," said: "Detention of asylum seekers is often arbitrary and detainees are not always in

detention, nor given an automatic right to challenge it before a court of law."

"Detainees are held not only in immigration detention centres but also in prisons," it said.

The report said some British regulations such as the "primary purpose rule" have led to families being kept apart and women being forced to choose between a violent home and deportation.

Under that rule, in a marriage between a national from outside the European Union and a British citizen, the onus is on the couple to show that the marriage is not principally to enable the foreign partner to obtain entry to Britain.

Applications from asylum seekers wanting to live in Britain are growing. In March 1993, the number waiting for a decision by British officials was 42,170. By last September, it was 52,760.

Fight begins to save smaller EU languages

STRASBOURG, France (R) — The battle to maintain the European Union's (EU) linguistic web began in earnest this week when members of the European Parliament attacked a French plan to reduce the number of EU working languages to five from 11.

As Euro-MPs from Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the Strasbourg-based assembly for the first time since the bloc was expanded to 15 from 12 countries on Jan. 1, France sought to play down earlier suggestions that the EU's daily work should be confined to English, French, German, Spanish and Italian.

"France has not made and will not make such a proposal during its (current six-month) stint in the EU presidency," French European Affairs Minister Alain Lamassoure said in a letter.

But Euro-MPs from countries with lesser-known languages are taking the threat seriously, fearing the idea could re-emerge in a scheduled 1996 intergovernmental review of the EU's workings.

Greek singer and Euro-MP Nana Mouskouri, who sings and speaks six languages fluently, took the matter up personally with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

"She expressed the hope that Mr. Juppe would support the maintenance of all the languages of the member states... which is something indispensable for the unity of Europe," a statement quoted Mrs. Mouskouri, who became a deputy in July, as saying.

Her colleague, Georgios Anastassopoulos, in the Greek European People's Party, agreed.

"I would find it very difficult to tell Greeks that they have no right to speak the language of Socrates," he said.

"We can not ask our electors to only elect people who have French and English," he told parliament.

"no" in a planned referendum on strengthening the EU in 1996.

"I'm sure. I'm quite sure that we would vote 'no' with a much bigger percentage than before. They can not phase the Danish language out. The Swedes will follow us," he said.

"I think it's a catastrophe for the Danish people. Even in Danish it's very difficult to understand the Maastricht Treaty. In the case of English it will be quite impossible for us to do it," she told Reuters.

Danes threw the bloc into crisis in 1992 when they initially rejected in a referendum the Maastricht Treaty laying down the path to EU economic, political and monetary union.

Wilfried Martens, now a Euro-MP and who over a decade as prime minister in linguistically divided Belgium saw more than his fair share of language-based troubles, said the move would turn a sceptical public opinion even more against the union.

"It's a very dangerous process. Those who are against integration will use this proposal to damage European integration... in the view of a lot of people in Europe it will even deepen the psychological gap," Mr. Martens told Reuters.

As France prepared last month for its stint as EU president, Mr. Lamassoure, the country's European affairs minister, said the EU's system of working languages would have to be reviewed as the EU expanded.

The expansion of the EU to 15 members on Jan. 1 added Swedish and Finnish to the EU's language list, making it 11.

Mr. Lamassoure said the enlargement could result in 110 language translation combinations requiring an army of interpreters. It could be hard to find people capable of cross interpretation between languages such as Greek and Finnish, he added.

He said the problem would become even more acute once the union expanded eastwards when Czech, Polish, Slovenian, Bulgarian and Romanian could become EU tongues.

Film world honours Fellini

ROME (R) — The giants of film honoured late Italian director Federico Fellini, launching a week of 75th anniversary tributes to a man whose work changed the face of cinema. Scores of directors, actors and cinema lovers flocked to a three-day conference in honour of the five-times Oscar winner and creator of some 30 films — including such classics as "La Strada" (1954), "La Dolce Vita" (1960). Fellini died on Oct. 31, 1993. He would have been 75 on Friday, when a major exhibition of his work opened in Rome before moving on to Germany, the United States, Britain and Japan.

"I find it hard to believe there won't be any more Fellini films. Without his magnificent presence, the world seems a little smaller, a little greyer," Hollywood director Martin Scorsese said in a videotape address to the conference. "Fortunately we still have his films and that will be his gift to us," said Scorsese. Actor Anthony Quinn, who played the circus strongman Zampano in Fellini's first Oscar-winner "La Strada," was a star speaker at the conference. "I loved Fellini's sense of fantasy. He told me I should never tell the truth. 'Everyone knows the truth. Tell them something they don't know, tell them your mother's a princess and your father's a giant. It's far more interesting,' he once said to me," recounted the silver-haired Quinn.

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (AFP) — A New Orleans woman has given birth to twins 95 days apart and in different years, setting a record for the longest period in which babies in a multiple pregnancy survived. Timothy Keys was born 15 weeks premature on Oct. 15, but doctors were able to keep Celeste in her mother's womb until full term and she was born Wednesday. Doctor Jay Goldsmith, one of the mother's doctors at Ochsner Foundation Hospital, said the twins would probably joke about the age difference ten years from now. Timothy was born in 1994 and Celeste in 1995. A Canadian woman pregnant with triplets had a Caesarean delivery 99 days after the first child was born but only the third baby survived.

Twins born 95 days apart

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Japanese climb Himalayan peak

KATMANDU (AP) — Two Japanese climbers have scaled the Himalayan peak of Mount Amadablam, the Tourism Ministry said Thursday. Yashubiro Takiguchi, 38, and Mitsuru Kimura, 29, both from Yamagata city reached the summit of the 6812-metre (22,480 ft.) high mountain Saturday, the ministry said in a statement. The climbers from the five-member Katmandu Club Amadablam Expedition 1994-95, spent 30 minutes on the summit, the statement said.

Star signs are all wrong, say astronomers

LONDON (AFP) — Forget about reading your horoscope to determine your future, you're almost certainly looking under the wrong star, according to Britain's Royal Astronomical Society. The Daily Telegraph Friday quoted society member Jacqueline Mitton as saying that instead of 12 constellations supposedly regulating our lives, the Zodiac actually has 13, creating a knock-on effect that shifts all the dates. The interloper, ignored by astrologers but covering people born between Nov. 30 and Dec. 17 who think they are Sagittarians, is Ophiuchus, a Latin version of the Greek god of medicine Asclepius, Ms. Mitton said.

Billy Joel donates to Red Cross

TOKYO (AFP) — American singer Billy Joel has donated part of the money he made from two concerts in Osaka to victims of the massive earthquake in Kobe and neighbouring areas, the Japanese Red Cross Society said Friday. Joel, 45, requested the Red Cross

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Lesson from devastation

THE BIG earthquake that devastated Kobe and took the lives of more than 4,000 people took experts by surprise not only in terms of its magnitude and location but also in terms of the standards the Japanese use in their construction codes against earth tremors. Japan is reputed to enjoy the strictest possible rules on how to deal with earthquakes stronger in scale than the Kobe tremor. There is a big lesson in this for California and other earthquake-prone lands which seem satisfied with existing building guidelines to lessen impact of natural disasters. If Japan's preparedness proved to be of little use, then other countries should start rethinking their policies to how to prevent catastrophes from occurring should they be the next target. One redeeming factor about Japan's current construction legislation is the fact that the modern buildings in the Kobe area withstood the recent earthquake much better than older buildings.

There is also a lesson in all this for Jordan which appears to be relatively immune from giant earthquakes.

The necessary conclusion from the Kobe experience is that earthquakes hit where they are least expected. This goes as well for Jordan. Should we wait till we are also devastated by an unexpected natural disaster before we start adopting serious measures to lessen their impact. Has the Civil Engineers Association, for example, recommended new guidelines for all new constructions? We all know that nobody in the country has started to take such threats seriously, much less do something about them. At a time when we all express our deepest sympathies to Japan and its people over the Kobe tragedy, we invite our authorities, whether public or private, to start taking such dangers more seriously and begin taking remedial actions as of now.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

TAHER AL Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, Friday expressed satisfaction and relief over the outcome of the Jerusalem Committee's meeting held in Morocco last week, saying that the Muslim countries are to be commended for adopting an unanimous stand vis-a-vis the status of Jerusalem. Praising Jordan's stand, which helped to avoid quarrels among Muslims, particularly between the Jordanians and the Palestinians, over the holy city, the writer said that Jordan ought now to follow up its positive steps by opening an immediate dialogue with the Palestinians with a view to bolstering joint action and increasing the scope of bilateral cooperation at the economic, political and social levels. The writer expressed belief that the positive outcome of the Jerusalem Committee's meeting is bound to pave the way for successful Jordanian-Palestinian negotiations, adding that Amman's bid to restore solidarity among Arab countries would eventually lead to a stronger pan-Arab position.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Friday said that the government's decision to raise the pension of employees who retired after December 1994 was bound to create a major financial crisis for the country. It is surprising that the government came up with this idea at a time when it is common knowledge that the country is facing a deficit, and that increasing the pension for only one group, is bound to raise complaints from the 477,000 military and civilian pensioners who would demand that their pension be increased as well in view of the rising cost of living, said Fahd Al Fanek. The writer said that those who call for the pension increase should first propose safe measures to help the government raise the additional funds for it. In order to meet the mounting demands for pension increases, the government has the following alternatives: To borrow more and increase the country's financial burdens, to print more dinars with no sufficient resources to back the move, to impose more taxes on the people who are bound to raise the hue and cry over such dangerous idea, or to beg other nations for financial assistance and compromise sovereignty, said the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

Arab ties must be predicated on new and solid foundations

By Dr. Musa Keilani

ONE OF THE tasks that His Majesty King Hussein assigned to the government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker in his letter of assignment earlier this month was to work towards improving Jordan's relations with some of the Arab countries which, for reasons best known to themselves, have been cool to the Kingdom's honest and sincere approach to open a new era in inter-Arab coordination, solidarity and unity at this crucial point in history.

The timing and circumstances somehow coincided in favour of Jordan, and the diplomatic skills of some of our rising stars on the political horizon interacted with the givens in Arab politics to give a successful boost to the serious responsibility that the King assigned to Sharif Zeid. That is what we saw in the successful visit of our Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to Cairo on Jan. 12 which heralded a visit by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to Jordan next week. Similarly, Mr. Kabariti also succeeded in breaking through what by most counts was a psychological barrier in Jordanian-Palestinian relations, and, hopefully, we will see Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestine National Authority (PNA), visiting Jordan sometime this week.

We don't exactly know yet what transpired in the meetings of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Morocco last week. But judging from the comments that Mr. Kabariti gave after the conclusion of the gathering some formula must have been found to satisfy Jordan's concern that the Arab and Muslim course in the context of Jerusalem needed a little more coherence if only to ensure that the Arab and Islamic identity of the Holy City does not fall to Israel by default. Hopefully, the emergence of the formula was also coupled with a better understanding of Jordan's argument against the Kingdom relinquishing its historic role as the custodian of the Islamic shrines in Jerusalem in the absence of a strong Palestinian authority to fill the vacuum that would be left behind.

Another feather was added to in Jordanian diplomacy with the invitation that Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib

Ben Yahya extended to Mr. Kabariti while in Morocco and the visit our foreign minister paid to Tunis on his way back home from the Jerusalem Committee meetings.

Recalling these recent events is not in any way gloating that Jordan has repaired the problems that plague inter-Arab relations, particularly the Kingdom's ties with some of its fellow members of the Arab League. Strides have been made, and we have to go a long way ahead before the Arab atmosphere is conducive to collective action to serve pan-Arab interests in the forward-looking spirit that Jordan has always advocated and followed.

"The peace treaty that Jordan signed with Israel on Oct. 26 resoundingly underlined the restoration of Jordan's international relations after a period of strain and highlighted the commitment and dedication with which the Kingdom followed every avenue for peace in the Middle East for decades."

The peace treaty that Jordan signed with Israel on Oct. 26 resoundingly underlined the restoration of Jordan's international relations after a period of strain and highlighted the commitment and dedication with which the Kingdom followed every avenue for peace in the Middle East for decades. It was not easy to reach that objective, but we are somewhere very near to the goal of a comprehensive, durable and just peace in the region. There might still be arguments and beliefs in some Arab and Muslim quarters in favour of the status quo that prevailed before the international conference that launched Middle East peace negotiations in Madrid in October 1991. But those argu-

ments and beliefs are simply naive and do not correspond to the realities of the age; that is, of course, if the objective is indeed to ensure a better life for the people and future generations, away from the nightmare of tension and bloodshed.

For us in Jordan, an excellent state of relations with every country in the world on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs has always been a much-sought goal. By and large, we have achieved it on the international level, and it was time we turned our energies to the regional scene. Now that peace is here, we need to muster all our energies and devote ourselves to those aspects of nation-building that we could not attend to because of our pre-occupation with the tension and uncertainties of the Middle East conflict.

The dividends of peace are there, but we have to work hard to make the best of them. And that requires fundamental changes in our mentality and approach to things. If we continue to rely on others to do the job for us, the job will never get done, at least not to our interests. We need international and regional goodwill and that could come only if we show ourselves capable of living up to the responsibilities that the era of peace has brought to our shoulders. That will come only through fresh concepts, which have little to do with the way our society is used to. Indeed, it is a difficult process, but it can be done and hopefully will be done. However, there are many important elements related to regional cooperation that would help along parallel to our internal efforts.

At the same time, we are not blindly seeking improved regional relations at any cost. We have our national priorities right and, based on our experience in our past dealings with our Arab brethren, we have to find a new relationship that appreciates and respects what we have done and are trying to do in the best interest of the Arab World at large. The first few steps have been taken, as we saw in the last weeks, and it is most important that we do not lose sight of not only our objective but also the features of the path that we have to take to get there.



Government must protect consumers' interests

By Elia Nasrallah

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily discussed the rising cost of living in general and the expected price hikes in the coming month of Ramadan, saying that in Ramadan families try hard to find vegetables and fruits at reasonable prices but are usually disappointed as they discover that they cannot afford to purchase most of the commodities. The writer, Nazih, urged the Ministry of Supply not to remain passive, but to interfere to protect the interests of citizens. The writer said that limited-income groups suffer more during the holy month because prices of various vegetables, fruits and meat unjustifiably rise.

Tackling a similar topic, Tareq Masarweh, a writer in Al Ra'i, pointed to the need to stem the greed of merchants, whom he described as sharks trying to swallow up everything. Taking the prices of coffee as an example, the writer said that when coffee prices went up, the wholesale merchants raised the prices of stock in their stores but when the world prices went down they refused to lower the prices. The same thing applies to other commodities, making it difficult for limited-income groups to cope, he said. Accusing rich merchants of smuggling their wealth abroad, the writer said that the rich, who thrive on the suffering of the poor, continue to mass fortunes and are allowed to get away with their actions.

Mohammad Daoud, a columnist in Al Dustour daily, said that only the government can stem the greed of merchants and put an end to corruption in the country. The writer said that misuse of public funds, negligence of public duty and massing of wealth in illegal ways is now commonplace in the country. What the people expect from the government is to flush out the corrupt people, put an end to favouritism and nepotism and reform the public administration system, said the writer. Jihad Momani, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that fines

and other penalties imposed by the local authorities on motorists who violate traffic laws are ineffective and the system is proving to be a failure. Sometimes we see police officers issuing tickets to law abiding citizens who forget to fasten their seat belts while youngsters who drive at very high speed and endanger people's lives are not punished. Drivers of mini-buses recklessly endanger not only the lives of passengers but also others on the road, but they, more often than not, get away with their actions because most of the roads are not watched by the traffic police who only choose certain locations to monitor traffic, said the writer.

Salemeh Ekour, a writer in Sawt Al Shaab, said that 400,000 non-Jordanians are allowed to work in the Kingdom at a time when the rate of unemployment is rising dangerously. The services sector employs most of the guest workers who are constantly transferring hard currency savings to

Palestinian life in the self-rule areas and the rest of the West Bank and are delaying the implementation of the Oslo agreement, said Mohammad Kawash. The enlargement of the existing Jewish settlements on Arab land or building new ones provides a sufficient proof that the Israelis are not oriented towards peace. He said there can be no peace as long as the settlement programmes continue. Sultan Al Hattab, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that peace should be an objective for all parties in the region and not a mere tactical move that would benefit one party at the expense of another. The writer said that separate negotiations between Israel and the Arabs have proved incapable of dealing with crucial issues of concern to all the parties in the peace process, and therefore there is a dire need for the Palestinians, the Jordanians and the Israelis to hold joint meetings to remove obstacles hampering the attainment of a lasting peace.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

their home countries, draining away the country's resources, said the writer.

Warning that most of the social unrest and disturbances in any country normally rise as a natural result of social discontent and poverty and unemployment, the writer said that the time has come for the government to interfere and force employers to abandon the habit of employing foreign workers, who accept lower pay and give priority to Jordanian workers even if the employers are forced in this process to pay higher wages. He said employers should shoulder their responsibility towards their country and countrymen.

Discussing the situation in the occupied Arab lands, a writer in Al Dustour said that, in view of the settlement programmes, the chance for achieving peace remains dim. The Israeli authorities are building settlements and continue to control the economies of

Failure or delay in the implementation of agreements can only serve the purposes of those who oppose genuine peace on both sides of the fence, he said.

Referring to Israeli settlement programmes in the occupied Arab territories, Tareq Masarweh said that if Israel is really oriented towards peace with the Arabs, it must abandon its expansionist policies in the occupied lands. Israel should give the Arabs concrete proof that it is not an expansionist power and that it is not trying to colonise Arab lands if it seeks their approval for peaceful coexistence with the Jewish state, said the writer. Mr. Masarweh recalled His Majesty King Hussein's statement that the Arabs seek peace which can be sustained and acceptable to the future generations, saying that the Arab masses need to be convinced that Israel is oriented towards peace.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as saying that Jewish settlements are a safe buffer zone protecting the Jewish state, and described the statement as a reflection of Israel's real intentions to keep its control over all Palestinian lands, regardless of the Oslo and the Cairo agreements. Lauding the courageous stand of Palestinians who are confronting the Jewish settlement programmes, the writer said that Israel's obstinacy with regard to the settlements issue is bound to trigger another and more violent intifada among the oppressed Palestinians.

Mohammad Subeini, said that Israel will remain a source of threat to Arab security until and unless it reaches genuine peace with the Palestinians and give up its colonisation of the West Bank. The writer said in a column in Al Dustour daily that there can be no peace unless the Palestinians are allowed to live in peace on their own homeland, which should be free of all settlements. He said there can be no genuine peace without the restoration of Arab Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty. Despite the signing of peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt, Israel will have no real peace if it does not respond to the Palestinians' just demands, he said. The writer said that Jordan, the Palestinians, Egypt and Syria should join forces and pressure Israel to give up the occupied lands.

Hani Saoudi, a writer in Al Ra'i, suggested that the warring factions in Kurdistan and other groups opposing the Iraqi regime meet in Jordan with Iraqi government representatives and discuss the best manner to safeguard Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. At least, the various groups can meet and decide on a policy to keep the Iraqi people united, he added. This move, he said, could lead to steps such as seeking the Arab countries' approval of ending the sanctions, added the writer. He urged the Iraqi government to adopt a position that would allow such steps to be taken and end the plight of the Iraqi people.

'We worship God with many voices but one heart'

By Dr. Albert B. Randall

ONE DAY in late May 1993, just as the sun was setting I stepped onto a small outdoor balcony attached to the room on the 11th floor of the El Faddai Hotel in Damascus, where I was staying. As the last rays of the sun began to disappear, the early evening air was filled with the antiphonal music of dozens of mosques calling Muslims to the sunset prayer. From all four corners of the city (it seemed like the four corners of the world), the emotional and powerful call to prayer filled the sky as faint stars became visible: "God is most great... There is no God but God... Mohammed is His Prophet... Come to prayer... Come to fulfillment... There is no God but God... God is most great..."

Even without knowing Arabic, the music of the words and the simple assertion of the oneness and the majesty of God in the call to prayer provided one of those moments essential to religious consciousness: The awareness of the ineffable, that is, the awareness and experience of a truth and a reality that go beyond the tiny world of the self and the empirical world. Arabic or English, "we worship God with different voices but one heart."

Three days later, in the remote and ancient Christian village of Maloula, Syria — the only place left in the world where the Aramaic that Jesus preached is still a spoken language — I visited the oldest convent in Christendom. The convent of Tekla was founded by a disciple of the Apostle Paul, Tekla, who was driven into the Syrian mountains by persecution. As the Mother Superior of the Convent told us the story of Tekla in Arabic (it was translated into English for those of us who did not understand Arabic) and the miracle of the mountain splitting and a spring flowing from its rupture, her eyes filled with tears of joy. The scriptural questions that the story might raise for some, were irrelevant and meaningless to her. As she told the story, it was a narrative which revealed the wonderful power and grace of God. Although we use different tongues, we worship God with one spirit.

One day later I visited the shrine of Zaynab (Mohammad's granddaughter), which is a 30 minute drive from Damascus. It is mostly a woman's shrine although many men were present. The shrine and its minaret are layered in a bright blue tile mosaic. Inside the shrine, the bright sun gleaming through the immense windows and reflecting off the blue mosaic, and passing through the

large chandelier created a natural laser effect. Zaynab's tomb remains one of the most stunning and beautiful religious shrines I have ever visited. However, far beyond its physical beauty, there was a wonderful religious beauty in a conjunction of immense religious significance. As women engaged in their religious devotionals at her tomb, their children ran, played and laughed: Worship and laughter — what a wonderful spiritual experience to have together.

On the Sunday before Christmas, feeling lonely for my wife and daughter, I wandered into a Greek Orthodox Church in Amman. It was located across the street from the beautiful King Abdullah Mosque, a Coptic Christian church.

"Even without knowing Arabic, the music of the words and the simple assertion of the oneness and the majesty of God in the call to prayer provided one of those moments essential to religious consciousness."

Even though the service was entirely in Arabic, and thus, I did not understand the meaning of the words, the musical quality of the Arabic service and the visual beauty of the Greek Orthodox liturgy made the service a moving spiritual experience of worship. During the first part of the liturgy, as the cross and the New Testament were walked through the congregation, many worshippers touched or kissed each as well as other sacred icons in the sanctuary. The service lasted almost two hours (much less than the three hours, beautiful Coptic service I attended the next Sunday). Throughout the service, many believers stood for the entire time, and most lit candles during various parts of the service. The service of worship concluded with the sharing of the bread and the cup. It was a worship experience of great beauty, for whether in Arabic or English, Egyptian Coptic or Greek, "we worship God with different voices but with one heart."

Dr. Albert B. Randall is professor of Philosophy at the Department of History and Philosophy at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. He has written this article for the Jordan Times.

Feature

King and Mu

(Continued from page 1) means to consolidate relations and clear the Arab atmosphere. President Mubarak is also likely to raise the status of Egyptian-Israeli relations in the wider context of regional disarmament. It was likely that President Mubarak, who is embroiled in a row with Israel over the Jewish state's nuclear weapons programme and the

Kabariti: Me

(Continued from page 1) Agency, Petra, quoted Mr. Kabariti as saying. At the conclusion of the meeting on Tuesday, Mr. Kabariti said Jordan fully supported the final resolution of the conference and pledged to work towards the implementation of its recommendations. Mr. Kabariti, who visited Tunisia in response to an invitation by his Tunisian counterpart, said his talks with Tunisian leaders, including Prime Minister Hamed Al Gharwi, were "very posi-

Kobe fights to

(Continued from page 1) side assistance, with electronics giant NEC offering 250 radios and Honda Corp. providing 50 generators. All Nippon Airways has offered to fly freight free into Osaka, and has added 42 additional flights to the route. Empower, a radio made a donation Thursday to quake victims and said he and the empress would visit Kobe. Debate grew Friday in Kobe and in the parliament in Tokyo on the reason why emergency services were late on the scene, and why city authorities were tardy in asking for military help for the rescue zone. Mr. Murayama has appointed a minister to oversee rescue and relief opera-

Israel, PLO mai

(Continued from page 1) there will be no more mission over government in the occupied territories. Added Environment Minister Yossi Sand: "I hope after Sunday everything will be clear for Israel and Palestinians alike." The Palestinians are demanding much more. "We are not satisfied with what Rabin said," raged Palestinian Local Government Minister Saeb Erakat. "What we want is a complete halt of settlement activities. He didn't commit himself to that." Dr. Erakat described the settlements as "time bombs in our faces." "Settlements and peace cannot go together," he added. "We hope the Israeli government will halt all settlement activities to give the peace process a proper chance." Israeli Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliesser said that in Sunday's cabinet meeting he would "expressly" back settlement projects in and near Arab East Jeru-

Peres due here 'soo

(Continued from page 1) countries and their peoples, a clause, which according to Western diplomats here, might be threatened by the Kingdom's moves towards consolidating relations with other Arab states, especially Egypt, which continues to insist on normalising relations with Israel 14 years after it signed a peace agreement with the Jewish state. But official sources here say that Jordan's quest to join Arab ranks has no bearing on Jordanian-Israeli relations and that the Kingdom is only seeking to improve its relations with Arab countries so as to contribute in serving towards peace. Israel's fears might stem from the fact that Jordan recently endorsed the resolution of the Egyptian-Syrian summit in Alexandria last month, which the Israelis considered as threatening in light of the deadlock in the Israeli negotiations. In that summit, the leaders of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia pledged full support for Syria's position in peace talks with Israel. Damascus would be reached until Israel reached a deal with Syria. The 1967 war, which Jordan declared support

King and Mubarak meet today

(Continued from page 1)
means to consolidate relations and clear the Arab atmosphere. President Mubarak is also likely to raise the status of Egyptian-Israeli relations in the wider context of regional disarmament.

It was likely that President Mubarak, who is embroiled in a row with Israel over the Jewish state's nuclear weapons programme and the

nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (see page 12), might seek Jordanian support for his stand that Egypt would sign the NPT only if Israel also does so when the document comes up for renewal in April.

Also expected to be discussed by King Hussein and Mr. Mubarak are Jordanian-Syrian relations, described as "quiet" in the wake of Syrian

criticism of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa was in Cairo late Friday for a brief visit and talks with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa expected to have focused on the Syrian-Israeli track of peace talks, the Egyptian-Israeli dispute and developments in the Arab World.

Kabariti: Meeting an achievement

(Continued from page 1)
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At the conclusion of the meeting on Tuesday, Mr. Kabariti said Jordan fully supported the final resolution of the conference and pledged to work towards the implementation of its recommendations.

Mr. Kabariti, who visited Tunisia in response to an invitation by his Tunisian counterpart, said his talks with Tunisian leaders, including Prime Minister Hamed Al Qarawi, were "very posi-

tive."

He said the discussions focused on "possible means to enhance Jordanian-Tunisian relations and the need to find a mechanism to settle inter-Arab disputes through preemptive action." He did not elaborate.

The foreign minister said he and Mr. Qarawi discussed plans to convene the Higher Jordanian-Tunisian Joint Committee under the co-chairmanship of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his Tunisian counterpart. The meeting will be held in Tunis soon.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahhaf, on his way home through Jordan after attending the Ifran meeting, said on Friday his country was keen to consolidate Arab solidarity and help Arab countries overcome their differences so that they are able to counter challenges facing them.

Mr. Sahhaf commended Iraqi-Jordanian relations and also lauded positive developments witnessed in his country's relations with some Arab Gulf countries, saying this was in the interest of the whole region.

Kobe fights to survive; toll rises

(Continued from page 1)
vide assistance, with electronics giant NEC offering 250 radios and Honda Corp. providing 50 generators. All Nippon Airways has offered to fly freight free into Osaka, and has added 42 additional flights.

Emergency workers made a donation Thursday to quake victims and said he and the empress would visit Kobe.

Debate grew Friday in Kobe and in the parliament in Tokyo on the reason why emergency services were late on the scene, and why city authorities were tardy in asking for military help for the disaster zone.

Mr. Murayama has appointed a minister to oversee rescue and relief opera-

tions — Sadatoshi Ozato, director-general of the Okinawa and Hokkaido Development Agencies.

The number of Self-Defence members mobilised was more than doubled from 5,000 to 13,000 overnight.

Survivors of the quake faced new threats — inadequate sanitation, freezing temperatures and water shortages. The quake transformed one of Japan's most modern port cities into smouldering rubble without enough electricity, food, fuel and clean water.

Three days after the quake 110,000 households remained without power and nearly 850,000 homes still had no natural gas. The health and welfare ministry said the

quake damaged so many underground pipes that water had to be shut off Friday to about one million homes.

Kansai Electric Power Company said it hoped to restore service within a few days. But the local gas company estimated it would take a month to repair broken lines and restore service.

Officials admitted that overcrowded shelters were critically short of all necessities. At one school, hundreds of refugees were camped in classrooms which had heat.

But scores of others were crowded into the unheated, concrete hallways, where they spent their nights wrapped in blankets shivering in the freezing cold.

Israel, PLO maintain talks

(Continued from page 1)
debate there will be no more confusion over government policy in the occupied territories.

Added Environment Minister Yossi Sarid: "I hope that after Sunday everything will be clear for Israel and Palestinians alike."

The Palestinians are demanding much more.

"No we are not satisfied with what Rabin said," raged Palestinian Local Government Minister Saeb Erakat. "What we want is a complete halt of settlement activities. He didn't commit himself to that."

Dr. Erakat described the settlements as "time bombs in our faces."

"Settlements and peace cannot go together," he warned. "We hope the Israeli government will halt all settlement activities to give the peace process a proper chance."

Israeli Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said that in Sunday's cabinet meeting he would "expressly" back settlement projects in and near Arab East Jeru-

salem, despite PLO warnings the new homes could scuttle the peace process.

"The battle is for Jerusalem," Mr. Ben-Eliezer said.

Senior PLO official Ahmad Qouriea, better known as Abu Alaa, criticised Mr. Ben-Eliezer for making "hostile statements." "He is trying to build his reputation at the expense of peace," Abu Alaa told Israeli Radio.

Mr. Rabin, trying summarily on Thursday with Mr. Arafat to bridge the rift with the PLO, appeared to have bought himself a badly needed measure of time to address the heated settlement dispute at home.

Ministers of the leftist Meretz party, largest coalition pillar of Mr. Rabin's Labour government, have called for an immediate halt to all new settlement construction in the occupied West Bank.

The ultra-religious Shas Party, a former coalition partner which has continued to back Mr. Rabin in critical parliamentary votes, said on

Thursday a settlement freeze would drive it into the arms of the hardline Likud opposition.

Mr. Rabin commands only a wafer-thin majority in parliament.

"If on Sunday the cabinet gives in to Meretz," Shas leader Arye Deri told reporters, "Shas will participate wholly in the opposition, and will head it where it comes to Jerusalem."

The face of East Jerusalem is so explosive a dispute that Israel and the PLO have showed talks on the Holy City as far into the future as possible.

However, the reemergence of the settlement issue — which was also to be discussed at a later date — has thrust Jerusalem to the forefront.

When Mr. Rabin came to power in 1992 he secured \$10 billion of U.S. loan guarantees by pledging to halt settlement, seen by the Palestinians as a provocation and by Washington as a primary stumbling block to peace.

At the same time Mr. Ben-Eliezer's housing ministry has quietly nursed along plans for tens of thousands of homes girdling the city in a vaguely defined ring called "Greater Jerusalem."

Palestinians fear Israel is racing to stake claims ahead of talks on the city, which are scheduled to begin by mid-1996.

Labour hawk and Jerusalem political boss Emanuel Zisman said: "Since this government arose, building and population growth has continued in Maaleh Adumim, Givat Zeev, and other settlements east of Jerusalem, all of it with the knowledge, approval, and even the encouragement of the prime minister's office."

Mr. Ben-Eliezer told Israeli Radio that a blanket settlement freeze near the city could invite protests at construction within East Jerusalem.

Last month settlers south of Jerusalem rekindled the settlement debate by breaking ground on hundreds of new housing units on a hilltop near the town of Bethlehem.

The project, and others undertaken in its wake, have lent fresh momentum to the settler movement, which for the most part had lain in a state of dormant disarray since the Rabin victory.

After Thursday's two-hour meeting at the Erez crossing point into the Palestinian self-rule area, Mr. Arafat indicated he was not entirely content with the Israeli position on settlements.

"Somewhere in between," Mr. Arafat said when asked if he was satisfied by Mr. Rabin's assurances.



Bosnian women check the price of items at a Sarajevo market (AFP photo)

Firewood, tangerines wait for opening of Sarajevo road

By Arthur Allen
The Associated Press

BUTMIR, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Jusuf Selmanovic could see Sarajevo a kilometre away as he unloaded 21 tonnes of tangerines, lemons, apples and bananas from his truck in the bitter cold.

But a kilometre is a long way in Bosnia's war.

Mr. Selmanovic's hope of carting fresh fruit into the city, spurred by the Bosnian Serbs' promise to unblock a route linking Sarajevo with the world, ended Monday with Mr. Selmanovic unloading the crates into a warehouse in this suburb of the Bosnian capital.

The Serbs on Saturday refused to lift their blockade of the U.N. route linking Sarajevo with government-held land on

the other side of the U.N.-controlled airport. Hopes that the route will open have faded, and optimism that the current cease-fire would bring peace has flagged as well.

"I wanted to make Sarajevo happy," said Mr. Selmanovic, a 42-year-old businessman.

Mr. Selmanovic said he spent \$20,000 buying the produce and trucking it from the Croatian border over Mount Igman to Butmir, a government-held suburb separated from Sarajevo by the airport runway.

"I was ready to sell it at cost, because many people haven't eaten fruit in a long time," he added.

Mr. Selmanovic drove three days in hopes of entering Sarajevo, stopped in Butmir on Sunday night, he set fires under his tractor-

trailer to keep the fruit from freezing. Finally, he gave up and emptied his truck into a warehouse in Butmir, where the produce will be sold.

U.N. cargo planes and trucks entering Sarajevo over another route bring in the staples that keep the city alive. But that doesn't include fresh produce, and it's not enough to stop the suffering.

The aid flights and convoys don't combat the cold, either. Ten thousand cubic metres of the firewood — Sarajevo depends on — enough to heat 2,000 apartments for the winter — are waiting on the wrong side of the airport.

At a former construction supplies warehouse, the firewood is stacked in long, neat rows under a foot of snow.

"We organised people in the villages around here to collect wood for Sarajevo," said a soldier who would only identify himself as Ekrem. "But none of the U.N. agencies will take it through."

Aid agencies want to move the wood, but the Serbs won't let them, said Kris Janowski, a U.N. spokesman.

Although the Serb side allows U.N. drivers to bring in blankets and plastic sheeting to keep the wind from whipping through shattered windows, the Serbs won't approve wood shipments.

"I think they just want to keep people cold and miserable," Mr. Janowski said.

Wood costs about \$30 per cubic metre in Butmir. Across the airport, wood hacked from trees on

sniper-exposed hillsides is sold for four times as much.

With the airport route closed, Bosnian soldiers and civilians with military-supplied passes evade the Serb blockade by carrying food and other goods, including firewood in small quantities, through a narrow 760-metre tunnel under the airport.

On Butmir's main street, a shepherd drove sheep towards a slaughterhouse. From there, the meat, too, would be smuggled underground.

At a little stand set up on a piece of salvaged bus, two soldiers sold brandy, cigarettes, coca-cola and frozen chickens.

The buyers were other soldiers, stuffing their packs with goods for the tunnel journey back to Sarajevo.

Chechen

(Continued from page 1)

our land. They're the ones who came to fight." Soldiers and 553 Russian soldiers had been killed, while a further 279 Russian soldiers were missing in action.

The civilian death toll in the city could only be guessed at.

Those who could find transport took everything they had — televisions, stoves, refrigerators. But others left on foot, some carrying nothing but their children.

But Friday's attacks also cut off the road leading south from the Chechen capital, until now the only route open for refugees to flee and Chechen reinforcements to move in.

As the Chechens are driven out of Grozny, nearby villages are feeling the heat more than ever.

In Goyti, 15 kilometres from Grozny, armed men patrolled the streets and the third of shelling could be heard clearly.

A village elder, Mohammad Sandeyev, said his village would be destroyed if it resisted.

"We do not have military forces, we do not have tanks, or planes. We would like to compromise, because if the war comes here, the village is gone. But if we have to resist, we will resist," he said.

In Samachki, a village in western Chechnya on the border with Ingushetia, residents said they had been attacked by a Russian unit, one of an increasing number of reported clashes on the border area.

The troops entered the village Wednesday with three tanks but were repulsed by villagers who returned fire, killing eight troops and wounding two, said Iliya Susaiev.

President Yeltsin declared the military campaign in Chechnya practically over after his forces hoisted Russia's flag over the presidential palace in Grozny on Thursday.

Seismologists wonder whether quake is prelude to even bigger one

By Seth Sutel
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Even as Japan struggled to cope with an earthquake that shattered a western port city, quake watchers warned that more powerful jolts could be on the way.

"The movement of active faults like this one would trigger other movements," said Kazuo Oike, a Kyoto University seismologist.

"We might face similar major quakes."

In the weeks before Tuesday's earthquake, Japan had had an unusual amount of seismic activity. Most of the quakes were in the northern part of the country.

Tuesday's tremor, centred under an island in Japan's inland sea, killed more than 1,200 people and left thousands injured. Hundreds remained trapped in the rubble.

More than 500 aftershocks rattled the region around Kobe, 430 kilometres west of Tokyo.

Seismologists predicted some aftershocks were likely to approach the strength of Tuesday's quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 7.2 on the Richter Scale.

Katsuyuki Abe of Tokyo University's Seismology Institute said there was a good chance that aftershocks with a magnitude of greater than 6 would strike in the coming weeks.

"People should remain cautious," he said.

While the areas around Tokyo and the northern island of Hokkaido have suffered a series of quakes in the past few years, the western region around the commercial hubs of Osaka and Kobe has been nearly quake-free for some 40 years.

That may be about to change.

Mr. Oike of Kyoto University said this quake marks the start of a seismically active phase that could last two or three decades. In the short term, Mr. Koike said big aftershocks are likely to shake

the region around Kobe for the next several months at least.

"Stress has been building up for some 40 years, and there is still a lot left," he said.

As bad as the destruction was in Kobe, observers were quick to point out how much worse a similar magnitude quake in the capital would be.

Kobe has a population of 1.4 million; 12 million live in Tokyo.

"If a similar earthquake had hit Tokyo, it would be much more disastrous. It's unimaginable," said Toshiyuki Katada, Musashi Tech University geology professor.

"What we observed today is a miniature version of what might happen in a possible giant quake in Tokyo."

In the hours after the quake, it quickly became apparent that the costs would be staggering. One analyst estimated them at \$10 billion to 20 billion. Full rebuilding could take years.

The quake is already leading to hard questions about building practices in Japan.

Kobe has two large developments on reclaimed land, where the ground surface cracked, water spurted out and buildings sank into the muddy ground.

The quake also triggered the collapse of some buildings and roads that officials had thought would stand up better to a strong quake.

"The disaster was a result of our insufficient work," said Motohiko Hakuno, a Tokyo University engineering professor.

"We should have made the city sturdier."

Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama said now is not the time for recriminations. Saving lives should come first, he said.

"The most important thing we should be thinking about is to do our best to minimise the damage," he said. "Then we can get down to studying the cause."

Copenhagen prepares for social summit

By Erik Ramussen
Special to the Jordan Times

COPENHAGEN — Copenhagen will this March host the World Summit for Social Development and at present more than 100 presidents, prime ministers and government leaders are expected to participate in the summit which was agreed on by the United Nations in December.

This figure does not include heads of states of the European Union (EU),

who are also expected to show up or U.S. President Bill Clinton who are likely to attend the summit accompanied by 700 civil servants.

Thus the World Summit for Social Development, to be held March 6 to 12, will bring together more heads of state than the World Summit on Environment and Development which convened in the Brazilian capital Rio de Janeiro three years ago with the participation of 70 state and

government leaders.

"Countries who will be represented in the summit by cabinet ministers and the Danish U.N. ambassador, Hugo Oostergaard-Andersen, who expects the number of participating countries to rise to 185 countries."

Despite the impressive attendance of world leaders, the Danish minister of development warns against too high expectations as to the outcome of the World Social Summit, whose

objectives, in accordance with Article 55 of the U.N. Charter, is to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" as well as "solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems."

Some of the expectations of the world summit are based on non-realistic assessment of the world, says the minister of development.

Australian Open

Courier marches into fourth round

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Two-time champion Jim Courier blasted a path into the last 16 with a cracking straight set win over Australian Mark Woodforde at the Australian Tennis Open Friday.

Courier, seeded ninth, strung together his eighth straight win in Australia this year, with a 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 demolition of the Australian left-hander in one hour 45 minutes.

Courier came into the tournament winning the Australian Hardcourt championship in Adelaide where he beat Woodforde in the semi-final in straight sets.

The no-frills Courier set up a round of 16 encounter with Czech Republic's unseeded Karel Novacek, who earlier Friday dumped seventh seeded Michael Stich out of the year's first Grand Slam.

The German serving giant, a former Wimbledon champion and a U.S. Open finalist last year, continued his sequence of early exits at the majors when Novacek ejected the seventh seed, 7-5, 6-2, 6-4 in 99 minutes.

Stich made first round exits at last year's Australian Open and Wimbledon, second round at the French Open and was a first round loser at the 1993 U.S. Open.

"I feel I am playing at a high level and I served well on the big points," said Courier.

Asked if he would lose a set given his current strong form, Courier said: "Just stick around, I'll lose couple. I am playing very well, but there will be days when some guys are going to beat me. I know that...but hey, I'm happy now, I'm smiling."

Courier was broken in his opening service game to love with the home crowd backing for Woodforde, but the 24-year-old Courier hit back breaking the red-headed Australian to 15.

Courier, controlling the match with his fierce forehands and working to Woodforde's backhand, broke in the sixth game when Woodforde's forehand was long to lead 4-2.

The American broke Woodforde's serve in the ninth after he had held a total of five set points.

Courier turned up the intensity a few more notches in the second set, breaking Woodforde in the fifth and ninth games to take a 2-0 lead.



Jim Courier

Although Woodforde broke Courier in the third match to lead 2-1, Courier back in the sixth when the Australian's backhand went over the baseline and he broke again in the eighth to lead 5-3 and serve out for the match.

Courier's serve was on the spot, with a 65 per cent first service and four aces.

He hit 32 winners to Woodforde's 26 and held a total of 10 break points to Woodforde's six.

Courier hit 17 forehand winners, while Woodforde committed 32 unforced errors.

Earlier in the day, Pete Sampras marched into the fourth round disturbed by yet another health scare to the man who guided him to world No. 1.

Sampras disposed of Swede Lars Jonsson, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4, parcelled up in 99 minutes to set up a round of 16 meeting with 15th seed Magnus Larsson, also of Sweden.

But Sampras had to play on after he learned that his coach of three years, Tim Gullikson, had collapsed and had been taken to hospital. He was said to be having tests and resting in hospital late Friday.

It is the third setback for 43-year-old Gullikson, who has had two strokes and been diagnosed with a heart problem.

Gullikson, who is re-

portedly on a blood-thinning drug, first became ill during a tournament last October in Stockholm where he crashed into a glass table and badly cut his face, requiring many stitches.

He again came to grief early last month during the Grand Slam Cup in Munich suffering another stroke which hospitalised him for eight days before he returned home.

Now after accompanying Sampras to the Australian Open Gullikson is again in hospital.

Amy Frazier, the American 14th seed, was the casualty in the women's draw, succumbing to Japan's Kyoko Nagatsuka, 6-3, 6-3.

Nagatsuka, a 20-year-old from Chiba City, is making a name for herself having ended Martina Hingis's run in the second round.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez had to contend with an aggressive Kristie Boogert and a stiff neck before clinching a place in the fourth round.

Martinez, seeded second to Spanish compatriot Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario here, blunted Boogert's 170kph serves, to win her third round match, 6-3, 2-6, 6-3, in 114 minutes.

Martinez, who described the 21-year-old Dutch player's performance as "unbelievable," will now play

Romanian Irina Spirlea in the round of 16.

Madagascar player wins over the crowd

If there was a prize for niceness at the \$6.2 million Australian Tennis Open, Dally Randriantefy of Madagascar would win it in straight sets with her disarming smile and refreshing charm.

Dally, at 17 the first professional from the Indian Ocean island, went down fighting here Friday to fellow French-speaker Mary Pierce 6-3, 6-3 in the third round of the women's singles, but won the hearts of the centre court crowd.

"I gave all I had and I am happy about that," Randriantefy said, flashing her bright smile and the gold stud that covers old scar tissue in her nose.

It was not so much about winning or losing, but the way she played the game. It's not about technical or tactical things," she said, but about "fighting, and I am happy."

Randriantefy, who has yet to turn a profit as a professional, and depends on a Swiss-based institution to keep going, has earned \$14,250 U.S. here.

Two Germans have blitzed opponents with services breaking the 200kph barrier during the first two rounds, with Lars Rehmann and Michael Stich both hitting 205kph.

Chang hungry for another Grand Slam title

MELBOURNE (AP) — It is more than five years since Michael Chang shocked Stefan Edberg and the tennis establishment at the French Open and became the youngest Grand Slam singles winner.

The American is hungry for another major, but says he is not frustrated by his failure to add another to his list.

"I feel everything is in God's time," Chang, the fifth seed, after beating German Martin Damm 6-3, 7-5, 6-3 to move into the fourth round of the Australian Open, the year's first Grand Slam tournament.

"The opportunity will come around for me to win another Grand Slam...I'm still hungry for the next one. You know, once you get the first, you think this kind of tastes good and you want a second."

Chang, 22, ranked sixth in the world, is a self-effacing man with a strong religious faith.

He is known for having a wide range of interests outside tennis, and is involved in charity work and tennis development programmes in Asia.

"There are times when I wonder what God has planned for me," he said.

"Tennis is not the most important thing in my life...but that doesn't rule out wanting another Grand Slam. Sometimes when you're seeing your peers winning grand slam titles, you want a piece of that. I never thought about winning a Grand Slam title at 17 in the French Open, so in that sense God's timetable is way ahead of mine."

Chang, winner of a career-best six ATP tour finals and U.S. \$1.79 million prize money last year, said the



Michael Chang

rebound ace surface at the Australian Open suited his game.

"It's pretty similar to the U.S. Open," he said. "I'm most comfortable on a hard-court surface."

He said he did not fear any player on the men's tour.

"I'm not afraid to play Pete (Sampras) at all. I'm not afraid to play anyone at all," the Nevada-based Chang said.

"I'm not going to step out on court thinking someone else is better. Otherwise you've lost before you start."

Chang defied windy conditions to down Monte Carlo-based Damm, ranked 84 in

the world on court 2 at the National Tennis Centre.

At 4-3 in the final set, as Chang stepped up to serve, a sudden gust whipped a court-side umbrella into the air and the handle pierced a stand hoarding, emerging between two spectators in the first row.

Chang, however, did not rate the conditions overly difficult.

"It was a little bit more difficult, but you'd rather deal with wind than heat," he said.

Chang, playing in his third Australian Open, faces Frenchman Olivier Delaite in the fourth round.

rebound ace surface at the Australian Open suited his game.

"It's pretty similar to the U.S. Open," he said. "I'm most comfortable on a hard-court surface."

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49ers big betting favourite to win Super Bowl

LAS VEGAS (R) — The San Francisco 49ers are nearly three touchdown favourites to beat the San Diego Chargers in Super Bowl XXIX, a record for the biggest point spread set by this town's casinos for the big game.

The spread ranged from 19-20 points for the showdown on January 29th for the National Football League championship.

"The public's perception is that the 49ers are the greatest team since sliced bread," said Fred White, sports book manager of Leroy's Horse and Sports Place, a firm which operates race and sports books at 36 outlets throughout Nevada.

"The public feels San Francisco just can't lose," said White.

The 49ers scored 505 points during the 1994 regular season, one of the highest totals in NFL history. The Chargers scored 381 points.

"But the public perception is being blown away out of proportion. If this was a regular season game the point spread would be 12," White said.

"I think the public would lay 30 points on San Francisco," says Sid Diamond, sports book director at the Excalibur, only partly in jest.

San Francisco and San Diego met in the regular season with the 49ers winning 38-15.

That San Diego barely won its two playoff games by a combined total of just five points, while San Francisco

won its two games by 39 points, including a 10-point victory over the two-time defending Super Bowl champions Dallas Cowboys, hasn't helped inspire confidence in the Chargers.

"I was trying to decide what case I could make for San Diego winning, and I can't necessarily find one," said Bob Gregorka, race and sports book director at the Sands.

"We just can't attract much San Diego money right now," says Russ Culver, sports book director at the Palace Station.

Sports books try to have the same amount of money bet on each team to reduce their dependence on a particular team covering or failing to cover the point spread.

Sports books make a profit from a 10 per cent fee or "vig" that's charged each better when the wager is made.

The most one-sided perception of a Super Bowl contest before this year was in 1969 when the Baltimore Colts opened as a 16-point favourite over the New York Jets and closed as an 18-point pick.

The Joe "Willie" Namath-led Jets upset the Colts 16-7.

"San Diego doesn't have Joe Willie," White said.

Marino, Sanders voted MVP

Valuable Player in their conferences in balloting by the National Football League Players' Association Thursday.

Marino threw for 4,453 yards and 30 touchdowns in leading the Dolphins to the AFC East title.

Sanders led the league in rushing with 1,883 yards on 331 carries to earn NFC MVP honours. Sanders also had 10 games with at least 100 yards rushing.

Players voted for awards in eight categories for each conference. The following is the complete list of 1995 NFL award winners:

American Football Conference (AFC)

Most Valuable Player: Dan Marino, Miami Dolphins
Special Teams Player of the Year: Eric Metcalf, Cleveland Browns
Offensive Lineman of the Year: Richmond Webb, Miami Dolphins
Defensive Lineman of the Year: Marshall Faulk, Indianapolis Colts
Defensive Back of the Year: Bruce Smith, Buffalo Bills
Linebacker of the Year (tie): Kevin Greene, Pittsburgh Steelers, Junior Seau, San Diego Chargers
Defensive Back of the Year: Rod Woodson, Pittsburgh Steelers
Defensive Rookie of the Year: Antonio Langham, Cleveland Browns

National Football Conference (NFC)

Most Valuable Player: Barry Sanders, Detroit Lions
Special Teams Player of the Year: Mel Gray, Detroit Lions
Offensive Lineman of the Year: Willie Orr, New Orleans Saints
Defensive Lineman of the Year: Reggie White, Green Bay Packers
Linebacker of the Year: Ken Harvey, Washington Redskins
Defensive Back of the Year: Deion Sanders, San Francisco 49ers
Defensive Rookie of the Year: Bryant Young, San Francisco 49ers

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Jim Carrey in THE MASK Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Fifi Abdo, Mamduh Abdul Alim & Adel Adham in: The Banner Is Red Arabic Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 The movie: The Lion King will be shown at 5 p.m. every evening as well as extra shows on Fridays and Thursdays at 10:30		CONCORD "1" Sylvester Stallone - Sharon Stone in THE SPECIALIST Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Harrison Ford - Whitney Houston - THE BODYGUARD Shows: 3, 5		SUM'A in the satirical play HI CITIZEN Composed and directed by Mohammad Al Shawaqieh Daily from 8 p.m. Children's Play The Ninja Turtles Show Directed by Akram Abul Ragheb Daily at 10:30 p.m.		Presents Abu Awwad in the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day		Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 in English Sunday	

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European Basketball Roundup

Pesaro, Olympiakos top standings

LONDON (R) — An unstoppable Joe Binion scored 24 points to power Bologna to a 74-59 in over-exhausted Limoges in the men's European Champion Clubs Basketball Championship.

Binion, a bulky forward who had no trouble bullying his way through the French, exploded with 15 points in the second half with help from Serb Predrag Danilovic as Bologna stayed joint top of Group B.

Lanky forward Flavio Carrara ignited the Italian fans with three straight slam-dunks which helped settle the issue with 15 minutes to play.

American Michael Young led Limoges with 18 points followed by Marc M'Bahia 13.

Dragan Tarlac was in sparkling form for Olympiakos, netting 26 points, as the Greek club bounced back from last week's defeat to win 69-60 away to Cibona Zagreb.

Olympiakos top the group on 15 points with Bologna. Efes Pilsen and Barcelona, the Spaniards beating Germany's Bayer Leverkusen 75-64.

Pesaro of Italy head Group A with 16 points after their 89-76 defeat of close challengers Real Madrid.

Greek club Panathinaikos could have joined the Italian at the top but lost narrowly to Maccabi Tel Aviv, succumbing 92-91 in overtime.

Barcelona's Group B success cut short Bayer Leverkusen's four-game winning streak.

The Spanish League leaders took the initiative, leaping to an early 7-0 lead.

But with American base Tom Garrick in charge of the attack the Germans reduced the deficit to two points half way through the first period.

Barcelona held their lead until the interval and then

turned on the style in the second half.

First, Salvador Diez notched a pair of triples and then a perfect free throw from Roy Fisher gave the Catalans a virtually unassailable 16-point lead.

The visitors fought back bravely but when Garrick was sent off three minutes from time for his fifth personal foul resistance crumbled and Barcelona cruised to victory.

Bayer's Henning Harnisch led the German attack with 14 points while Darryl Middleton top-scored for Barcelona with 13.

RESULTS

In Rome:

Group A

Pesaro (Italy) 89 Real Madrid (Spain) 76

Leading scorers:

Pesaro: Antonello Riva 25, Walter Magnifico 15.

Real Madrid: Arvidas Sabonis 26, Joe Arlauskas 21

Salonika (Greece) 73 Halkette 47-38.

In Slovenia: Olimpija Ljubljana (Slovenia) 64

Benfica (Portugal) 56 (31-35).

Leading scorers:

Ljubljana — Milic 17, Hauptmann 13, Reed 12

Benfica — Jean Jacques 18, Carlos Lisboa 12,

Pedro Miguel 11.

In Barcelona: Barcelona (Spain) 75 Bayer Leverkusen (Germany) 64 (35-27).

Leading scorers:

Barcelona: Darryle Middleton 13.

Bayer Leverkusen: Henning Harnisch 14 more.

In Zagreb: Cibona Zagreb (Croatia) 60 Olympiakos (Greece) 69 (38-32).

In Bologna: Bologna (Italy) 74 Limoges (France) 59

(33-22).

Leading scorers:

Bologna: Joe Binion 24, Predrag Danilovic 13.

Limoges: Michael Young 18, Marc M'Bahia 13.

STANDINGS

GROUP A

Pesaro (Italy)	9	7	2	16
Real Madrid (Spain)	9	6	3	15
Panathinaikos (Greece)	9	6	3	15
CSKA Moscow (Russia)	9	5	4	14
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel)	9	5	4	14
Paok Salonika (Greece)	9	3	6	12
Olimpija Ljubljana (Slovenia)	9	3	6	12
Benfica (Portugal)	9	1	8	10

GROUP B

Olympiakos (Greece)	9	6	3	15
Bologna (Italy)	9	6	3	15
Barcelona (Spain)	9	6	3	15
Efes Pilsen (Turkey)	9	6	3	15
Limoges (France)	9	5	4	14
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany)	9	4	5	13
Cibona Zagreb (Croatia)	9	3	6	12
Joventut Badalona (Spain)	9	0	9	9

Juventus meet Cagliari Sunday

PARIS (AFP) — Italian league leaders Juventus learned mixed news on the run up to Sunday's away fixture with Cagliari marking the halfway point of the season.

On the up side, German Jürgen Kohler is back, but, perhaps more ominously, FIFA's 1993 world player of the year Roberto Baggio is likely to be out.

Wins over second-placed Parma and fifth-placed Roma in the last two weeks have put the 22-times champions firmly in the driving seat.

At least rejuvenated Gianluca Vialli and Fabrizio Ravanelli have done well this season in Baggio's absence. Both have scored seven times.

And 20-year-old sensation Alessandro Del Piero, who could soon herald the new generation in Italy's national squad, has been a revelation this year for coach Marcello Lippi.

But Juventus, who last won the title in 1986, have also great strength at the other end of the field in defence. Like last year's champions AC Milan and many great sides in former years, Juventus have a miserly goals conceded column.

Their 13 goals conceded in 15 matches is only matched by ninth-placed Inter Milan, who are languishing in ninth spot.

Parma, four points behind Juventus, host Napoli, who have been rocked by allegations of mafia involvement and drug-taking by players a few years ago.

More specifically, a party on April 29 1990, the date Napoli players celebrated their league victory on the yacht Angelina-Laura, was allegedly rife with cocaine.

Brescia host third-placed Lazio who thrashed Foggia 7-1 last week.

Fourth-placed Fiorentina travel to AC Milan in sixth spot, but Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta may be forgiven for being distracted by a club record.

Batistuta has so far scored 60 goals in 100 appearances since joining the Florence side in 1991.

Should he hit his 16th league goal in 16 appearances this season on Sunday, Batistuta would join Giancarlo Beltrami on top of Fiorentina's scoring list with 16 goals.

Real Madrid host Celta Vigo in their quest to consolidate their three-point lead. A 5-0 win over Barcelona and a draw at Deportivo La Coruna in the last two games have given Madrid hope of their 26th title.

Bulls, Cavaliers, Lakers lose

NEW YORK (AP) — A four-game road trip that began disastrously ended perfectly for the Utah Jazz.

After losing starting centre Felton Spencer for the season at Boston, the Jazz went on to win that game and three more, extending their road winning streak to 14. With a 99-86 victory over Detroit, Utah is two games shy of matching the 1971-72 Lakers' NBA record string.

But tying the Lakers, who won 16 straight road games during their incredible 33-game victory run, will be tough. Utah will have to win at Seattle and at Houston later this month to do it.

Beating a Pistons team that had only nine healthy players was hard enough for the Jazz, who needed a 17-point third quarter from Karl Malone to break the game open.

"It's tough to win like this on the road, because you can't play great every night," said Malone, who finished with 31 points and 11 rebounds.

A 14-2 run in the third quarter put Utah ahead by 15 with 5:24 left in the period. Joe Dumars scored five straight points to help the Pistons get to 78-69 early in the fourth, but Jamie Watson and Antoine Carr ended their hopes with back-to-back three-point plays.

"It looked to me like we respected the Jazz a little too much," Pistons coach Don Chaney said. "They are a very good team, and I understand that, but we have got to compete."

Jeff Hornacek added 14 points, and John Stockton had 11 points and eight assists.

Heat 121, Celtics 93: Miami returned from a 1-5 road trip to hand Boston its worst loss of the season.

Kevin Willis had 25 points and 18 rebounds for the Heat, which shot 58 per cent for the game and never trailed. Glen Rice added 20 points and Billy Owens 18.

Dino Radja led the Celtics with 25 points, and Sherman Douglas had 19. The Celtics were hurt by 19 turnovers, while Miami committed only seven.

76ers 92, Hawks 80: Philadelphia broke a nine-game losing streak by starting fast and finishing strong at Atlanta.

The 76ers took control with runs of 17-2 in the first quarter and 16-2 in the second. The Hawks closed with six points three times in the final period, but got no closer.

Clarence Weatherspoon scored 26 points and Dana Barros 24 for Philadelphia, which won for the first time since a 101-94 decision at Portland on Dec. 26.

Steve Smith paced Atlanta with 26 points.

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Steve Smith paced Atlanta with 26 points.

Pacers 106, Lakers 105: Derrick McKey hit the winning basket with 39 seconds left and scored a season-high 24 to help Indiana hold off Los Angeles.

The visiting Lakers, who trailed by 11 with 8:39 to go, rallied to take their only lead of the night on a 3-pointer by Nick Van Exel, who finished with 30 points.

Reggie Miller scored 19 for Indiana, including four 3-pointers. The Pacers played without centre Rik Smits, who had the flu.

Horsets 111, Spurs 110: Larry Johnson's layup with 14 seconds left gave Charlotte its ninth victory in 10 games.

The Hornets blew a 22-point lead in the second half to fall behind 110-109 before Johnson, who had 24 points, made his basket. Alonzo Mourning then blocked a shot by David Robinson, who scored 42, to preserve the win.

Charlotte got its 12th straight home victory.

Bucks 97, Bulls 93: Milwaukee got 24 points from rookie Glenn Robinson and 23 from Vin Baker to snap a 16-game losing streak at Chicago.

Todd Day added 19 points for the Bucks, who last won there in 1988.

Steve Kerr had a season-high 19 points for Chicago, which lost its fourth straight. Toni Kukoc added 16 and Scottie Pippen 15.

Magic 108, Mavericks 97: Shaquille O'Neal registered his fifth 40-point game this season, scoring 42 to lead Orlando at Dallas.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

On behalf of the "Water Quality Improvement And Conservation" Project, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, a U.S. Contractor invites training institutions and firms to prepare proposals for curriculum development and training delivery in management, technical engineering related to water management, computer, and financial management. Offerers are requested to pick up RFP No. Jordan 95-004 documents at room 215, Ministry of Water and Irrigation building, on or before 12:00 O'clock Noon January 25, 1995. Closing date for offers is 12:00 O'clock Noon March 9, 1995.

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Wihdat, Ramtha draw 1-1

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Wihdat and Al Ramtha Friday drew 1-1 in their match at Al Hassan Sports City Stadium in Irbid in the 21st week of the First Division Soccer Championship.

Al Wihdat could have secured the title had they won, however the draw still kept them at the top two points ahead of Al Ramtha with one week remaining.

Al Faisali are now third after their 3-0 win over Kufroum.

Al Karmel also beat Al Jeel 1-0.

Al Hussein will meet Al Jazireh in the final match of the 21st week Saturday (see details and standings in Sunday's roundup).

NHL games begin

NEW YORK (R) — The 103-day National Hockey League lockout gave new meaning to the term "kick save" — the owners kicked the players and the players saved the season.

Having demonstrated that at least one side in the bitter dispute actually loves the game of hockey at least as much as money, the world's best players are set to return to the ice.

The lockout-shortened 48-game schedule began Friday, and the format for the 1995 season presents a unique set of circumstances and challenges that are sure to delight some and anger others among fans and players alike.

Teams that get out of the gate fast will have a big advantage, while those that stumble out of the blocks could be in trouble. There will be little or no time to recover from an extended midseason slump or injury.

Before the Rangers against Buffalo, the 1993-94 Stanley Cup banner will be raised at Madison Square Garden, a ceremony feels will go a long way toward easing any bitter feeling New Fans may have over the near cancellation of the season.

Under the format announced by the NHL last week, the not so regular season, which concludes May 3, will be strictly an intra-conference affair. No eastern team can meet a western club before the Stanley Cup finals.

Eastern Conference fans will not see Gretzky, Russian rocket Pavel Bure, Brett Hull or League MVP Sergei Fedorov, to name a few — a situation that could hurt ticket sales.

Western Conference clubs will not host Montreal — usually a sure sellout — nor will they get a shot at the defending champions.

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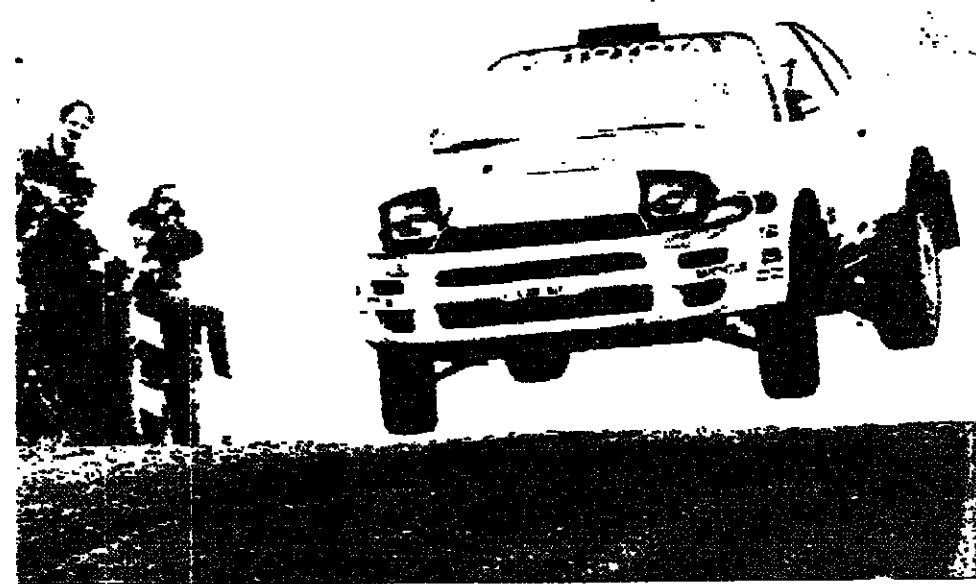
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Three times world champion Juha Kankkunen — Celica during last season's New Zealand Rally of Finland becomes Airborne in his Toyota (AFP photo)

Auriol starts title defence in snowy Monte Carlo

MONTE CARLO (R) — Frenchman Didier Auriol opens the defence of his world title Saturday in a Monte Carlo classic given extra spice this year by snow covering the twisting mountain roads and controversial new regulations.

The opening event of the season begins Saturday when the drivers start their cars from five European cities to join the principality for the first time stage Monday.

The line-up for the race is similar to last year's with Auriol, seeking his fourth win, teaming up with three-time world champion Juha Kankkunen of Finland for Toyota to launch a brand new Celica GT-four.

Auriol's main rival should once again be former champion Carlos Sainz of Spain, who had to watch helplessly as the Frenchman gave his country their first world title after he crashed out of the season's last race, Britain's RAC Rally.

Sainz, who won in Monte Carlo in 1991, expects a strong challenge within his Subaru team from talented Scotsman Colin McRae, who ended Britain's 18-year wait for a home winner by clinching the RAC Rally.

Other main contenders include Frenchman Francois Delecour, who started in style last year by winning in Monte Carlo in his Ford

Escort before suffering ankle and face injuries in a road accident.

Delecour was critical of the new regulations which will force the teams to field cars with less powerful engines and will reduce mechanical assistance and tyre changes.

"I wouldn't recommend people to come to the Monte Carlo Rally because there won't be much to see this year," said an angry Delecour. "We will have to drive cautiously to spare the tyres and it'll be much less spectacular to watch than in the previous years."

The weather is likely to prove Delecour wrong if the snow which fell heavily in southeastern France earlier this month sticks to the roads, making them icy and treacherous.

The race, which will end Thursday morning after the traditional night stages featuring the Turini Pass, has been held for the most part on dry roads in recent years.

Auriol, consistently deprived of a world title until last year by a string of mishaps, said he would be able to start his favourite event in a more relaxed frame of mind.

Sacked by Toyota two years ago following countless crashes, the fearless German returns to the team which helped him to his only world championship win so far, in 1991 in Spain.

"My goal is to score a couple of wins and hopefully, I won't be too far from the title when the season ends," he said.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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Iraq may agree to partial oil exports — diplomats

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq, facing acute shortages of food and medical supplies because of crippling U.N. sanctions, may be willing to settle for partial oil exports under U.N. supervision, Baghdad diplomats said on Friday.

"There is talk in town they (Iraqis) are ready to resume the stalled talks on partial exports if such a deal is to bring them closer to the lifting of the trade sanctions," a diplomat said.

Under the wide-ranging sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait the U.N. blocked Iraqi oil exports.

The sanctions permit Iraq to sell oil worth \$1.6 billion to pay for urgent humanitarian needs, but Iraq has not used the facility, saying it violates its sovereignty.

The last round of talks on the matter was held in July 1993 when the two sides almost reached agreement before Baghdad had a last-minute change of heart.

The diplomats said Baghdad believed the political atmosphere was now different and hoped for better terms.

"By resuming talks Iraq's aim is also to score another point on the path of compliance with U.N. resolutions and strengthen its position at the (U.N.) Security Council," another diplomat said.

The Security Council formally asked Baghdad this month to reconsider its attitude towards partial oil exports.

The sanctions have devastated Iraq's economy with shortages and hyper-inflation hitting the populace hard. Many people have to rely on subsidised government ra-

tions but last year they were cut by about half.

Baghdad pharmacy shelves are almost empty and health officials say government hospitals are operating at less than 50 per cent of capacity.

The Iraqi dinar tumbled to record lows against the dollar when the Security Council this month voted to maintain the sanctions at its 60-day review.

"The (living) conditions are worsening day after day," declared Iraq's most influential newspaper Babel — published by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday — in a commentary this week.

Iraq was hoping for an end to the oil embargo after it recognised Kuwait and accepted U.N. terms for the scrapping of weapons of mass-destruction.

But the United States' U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright said Iraq had first to "comply with its outstanding obligations."

Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan on Wednesday reiterated Iraqi objections to partial oil exports, saying the U.N. offer presented Iraq with "two choices, one worse than the other."

He said rejection of the terms meant further suffering and untold hardship for Iraqi people and accepting them would amount to a "flagrant violation of sovereignty."

Iraq on Friday charged that a U.S. firm chosen to fly U.N. observers to the Iraqi border with Kuwait had worked for American intelligence and denounced the choice as a "provocation."

The official Al Thawra newspaper said the selection of the U.S. company Evergreen to transport members of the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait

Observation Mission (UNIKOM) by helicopter favoured "U.S. acts of espionage on Iraqi territory."

Evergreen took over from the Canadian firm Skyline at the beginning of 1995 and, according to the paper, immediately carried out a mission over an Iraqi port on the Gulf outside the demilitarised zone patrolled by UNIKOM.

Al Thawra, the mouthpiece of Iraq's ruling Baath Party, charged that the company had been exposed in July 1993 by the Washington Post for taking part in missions to aid U.S. intelligence services in Cuba and Nicaragua.

"Washington is using the symbol of the U.N. for its own aggressive ends" which were already seen "in the regular violations of Iraqi air space by U.S. aircraft based in neighbouring countries."

Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz has slammed Warren Christopher as "insolent" after the U.S. secretary of state said Iraq should be isolated until President Saddam has stepped down from power.

"In all insolence Christopher gives himself the right to choose the leadership in Iraq," Mr. Aziz said in a speech here last Thursday.

"The affair of the embargo no longer reflects international law or the U.N. charter, but purely the Americans' decision to maintain the sanctions to force Iraq to abandon its sovereignty."

Mr. Christopher said in an interview with the Washington Times on Wednesday: "We must isolate Iraq and Iran until there is a change in their governments, a change in their leadership."

"These relations are deep and we have to recognise Egypt's central place in the peace process and in the region."

Relations between the two countries have soured mainly over the issue of Israel's reported nuclear arsenal.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has threatened Cairo will not renew its signature on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in April if Israel does not commit itself to joining.

The two countries have both warned they could take harsh measures if the situation deteriorates.

Earlier on Friday, an ally of Mr. Mubarak warned Egypt was capable of punishing Israel by frustrating its efforts at Arab-Israeli reconciliation.

"Israel thinks it is in a position to punish Egypt but it must also consider the fact that Egypt is not powerless, does not have its hands tied and does not lack influence in the Arab and Islamic world," the editor of Al-Ahram newspaper, Ibrahim Nafee, wrote.

The Israeli press last week published a leaked foreign ministry document which urged that "if Egypt continues its negative policies, Israel should take harsh retaliatory measures."

The Israeli document provoked an uproar in Egypt, which in 1979 became the first Arab country to make peace with Israel.

Mr. Nafee warned: "Egypt is capable of punishing Israel and demonstrating its power to influence relations between Israel and Arab and Islamic parties, and even go beyond that, although now is not the time to talk about that."

"The deliberate leak of the Israeli document to the press... largely eliminated hopes of establishing a new Middle East based on economic cooperation... which could integrate Israel," Nafee said.

"Israel will therefore be the big loser by speaking of punishing Egypt," he said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa is to present a report on "Israeli threats to national security" on Jan. 25, according to Cairo press reports.

And Mr. Mubarak, during a trip to Paris, blamed Israel for the faltering pace of the peace process.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin is due in Cairo at the weekend to try to defuse the tension.

He will also take part in a meeting of the liaison committee for multilateral peace talks, his ministry said.

On Bosnia, Mr. Stoltenberg stressed that there continues to be "no alternative to a negotiated solution."

But he added that his optimism about the possibility for a renewal of negotiations had declined over the past several days because of ceasefire violations around Sarajevo, Bihac and Srebrenica.

Mr. Stoltenberg said the five-nation Contact Group, which is scheduled to meet January 19 in Geneva, would continue to work to get the negotiations going again.



STRANDED AND HIDING: Chechen women who cannot leave Grozny because of lack of money for transportation hide themselves from shelling in the base of a building.

where they live after their houses were destroyed in the Russian bombing of the Chechen capital (see page one) (AFP photo)

Peres tries to cool Egypt dispute

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres tried Friday to take the heat out of a simmering war of words with Egypt, saying it was only a "fleeting crisis."

"There is no escalation between our two countries. Relations are just going through a fleeting crisis," Mr. Peres told Israeli radio.

"These relations are deep and we have to recognise Egypt's central place in the peace process and in the region."

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Islamic rule in Algeria inevitable — FIS leader

PARIS (Agencies) — The leader in exile of Algeria's outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) said in an interview published on Friday Islamic rule was inevitable in Algeria, and urged the West to press Algeria to settle its crisis peacefully.

"The Western nations must understand that, sooner or later, Muslim countries will be governed by Islamists. This is the wish of the people," said Rabah Kebir, president of the FIS executive in exile.

Mr. Kebir lives near Cologne and has applied for asylum in Germany. He was interviewed there by the French daily La Croix.

He told the newspaper the West must do more than simply appeal to Algiers to accept a joint opposition proposal for ending violence in the strife-torn country.

"France and the other Western nations must clearly support the Algerian opposition agreement. Those who have continuously called for a dialogue and a political settlement must now push for it," Mr. Kebir said.

One way the West could do so would be to the economic aid and debt rescheduling to a "true dialogue" with the opposition, he said.

"This is not now the case and I reject the argument of (French Foreign Minister) Alain Juppe that to reschedule Algeria's debt is to help

the Algerian people," he said.

Eight Algerian opposition groups including the FIS drafted a joint proposal in Rome to end their country's civil strife, which has killed as many as 30,000 people since the military in 1992 scrapped a general election the FIS was poised to win.

An Algerian spokesman and the interior minister have since dismissed the proposal, but Mr. Kebir said he remained optimistic.

Apartment from these two, "what is worth nothing is the absence of official reaction," he said. "That shows the authorities are still thinking. It would be very embarrassing for them to reject this peace offer."

He described the FIS as eager for dialogue and at least somewhat flexible in its demands. He acknowledged it had agreed, for example, to drop an earlier demand for punishment of those responsible for cancelling the 1992 elections as a condition for talks.

"It is a fact that the FIS wants to be realistic," he said. "We must first get out of this crisis, which is very dangerous. Neither the army nor the Islamic opposition is today in a position to win militarily."

U.S. view

The agreement by Algerian opposition parties and

Islamic fundamentalists on conditions for negotiating with the military-installed government could help end the civil war, says a senior U.S. official.

The Rome meeting "was a significant event, and one which we think could be built upon to find a path forward," Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau told reporters Thursday.

"We continue to counsel a path towards political dialogue and a return to political processes," Mr. Pelletreau said, adding that Algeria should "try to broaden the political base of the government."

The war between Islamic extremists and security forces in Algeria took on a new macabre note when a dead body booby-trapped with a bomb underneath killed two people and seriously injured a policeman.

The communiqué said the bomb placed under the body of a slain civilian went off when two people and a policeman turned it over. The body was found near Blida, about 60 kilometres south of Algiers.

Security forces also reported that five people working for a state-run company were injured in Bouira, east of Algiers, when a stolen car booby-trapped by an armed group exploded as the five tried to recover the vehicle.

Bazargan, Iran's first post-Shah premier, dies

NICOSIA (AP) — Mehdi Bazargan, Iran's first prime minister after the 1979 Islamic revolution, died Friday in Switzerland, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported.

Bazargan led a lame-duck government that appealed for reason amid the revolutionary fervor that culminated in the takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

The state-run Iranian news agency, monitored in Cyprus, said he died at a hospital in Bern, Switzerland. It said he was suffering from heart disease but did not give a specific cause of death.

Bazargan had been hospitalized in Tehran last year with a heart complaint. He was born in 1907, which would make him either 87 or 88 when he died.

The soft-spoken, French-educated engineer was a relentless campaigner for democracy and human rights for most of his life.

Less than a year after he was appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini to head the provisional government that replaced the ousted monarchy, he resigned as premier when Khomeini endorsed the 1979 embassy siege, in which 52 Americans were taken hostage for 44 days.

Bazargan went from one of the staunchest supporters of Khomeini and the revolution he led to one of the harshest critics.

After the revolution, the Freedom Movement he founded in 1961 was tolerated although its members were much harassed, until the government outlawed it in 1990.

It persisted in the form of a

spinoff, the Society for the Defence of Freedom, until September 1991 when eight of the society's members or sympathisers — including former government ministers — were imprisoned following secret trials for treason.

They were among more than 40 people arrested in mid-1990 after 90 leading liberals signed a scathing open letter to President Hashemi Rafsanjani demanding freedom and justice.

In a speech before he died in June 1989, Khomeini launched a veiled attack on Bazargan and his ilk, describing them as "liberals," an appellation that thereafter became a dirty word in Iranian politics.

At a time when the country's new clerical rulers propounded "revolutionary justice" in which thousands were summarily executed without so much as a hearing, Bazargan appealed for justice and calm.

In a speech at Tehran University before resigning in November 1979, he said: "Don't expect me to act in the manner of (Khomeini) who, head down, moves ahead like a bulldozer, crushing rocks, roots and stones in his path. I am a delicate passenger car and must ride on a smooth, asphalted road."

Bazargan earned a degree in thermodynamics at the University of Paris at a time when study abroad was a rare thing for a young Iranian.

He returned home in 1942 to teach at Tehran University, where he won a reputation as one of Iran's best mathematicians and was awarded the chair of thermodynamics at the university's



Mehdi Bazargan

technical college.

When Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh stripped the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. of its assets and nationalised the industry, he dispatched Bazargan to head the company's operations.

After Mossadegh was ousted, Bazargan plunged into a tireless campaign to overthrow Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whom he accused of human rights violations. He was jailed several times, including a five-year term beginning in 1962.

This allied him with Khomeini, who assigned him to direct the oil industry strike in 1978 that crippled the main pillar of Iran's economy.

But as head of the short-lived provisional government, Bazargan was constantly frustrated. "They have put a knife in my hand, but it is a knife with no handle. Others are holding the blade," he said in describing his government.

He parted company with Khomeini basically over the issue of who should run the country. While Khomeini believed that the Shiite clergy was best suited for the task, Bazargan — a devout Muslim — believed in a government based on Islamic principles but run by laymen.

Columbia 800000

Camilla granted divorce

LONDON (AP) — Camilla Parker Bowles, who has been romantically linked to Prince Charles, and her husband were granted an uncontested divorce. The couple did not appear in court for the granting of a decree nisi, or conditional decree of divorce. The separation is expected to become final within six weeks. The couple have two children — Tom, 20, a student at Oxford, and Laura, 16. Andrew Parker Bowles, 55, and his wife, Camilla, 47, said in a joint statement earlier this month that they had jointly agreed to the split. "We have grown apart to such an extent that with the exception of our children and a lasting friendship, there is little of common interest between us," their statement said. Mrs. Parker Bowles is reported to have had three affairs with Prince Charles, the first before her marriage, the second before his. Prince Charles confirmed in a television interview last year that he had broken his marriage vows, after his relationship with Princess Diana had broken down "irretrievably."

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